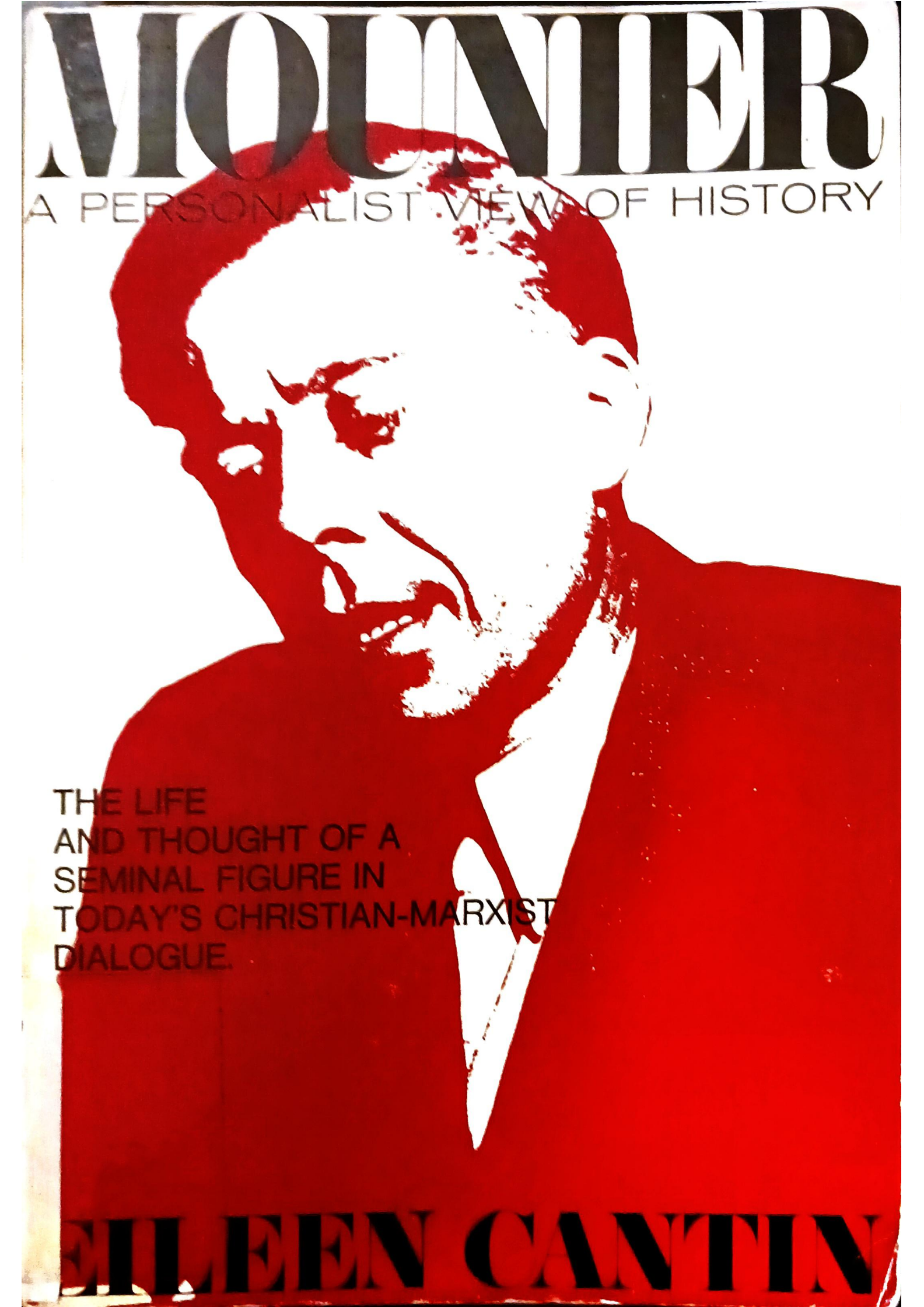


MONUMENT



A PERSONALIST VIEW OF HISTORY

THE LIFE
AND THOUGHT OF A
SEMINAL FIGURE IN
TODAY'S CHRISTIAN-MARXIST
DIALOGUE.

EILEEN CANTIN

MOUNIER

**A Personalist View
of History**

by

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*To
my mother and father
whose shared histories
made this work possible*

Preface

One of my favorite books is Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. And one of my favorite passages in that book records an exchange between the geographer and the little prince.

"Geographies," said the geographer, "are the books which are most concerned with matters of consequences. They never become old fashioned. It is very rarely that a mountain changes its position. It is very rarely than an ocean empties itself of its waters. We write of eternal things."

"But extinct volcanoes may come to life again," the little prince interrupted. . . .

"Whether volcanoes are extinct or alive, it comes to the same thing for us," said the geographer. "The thing that matters is the mountain. It does not change."

Obviously the geographer would not approve of the present trend of lumping geography and history into "social studies." For history is concerned with ephemeral things like roses and people and other living things.

Because Emmanuel Mounier sometimes sounds like the geographer and sometimes like the little prince (more often than not like the little prince), I decided to investigate his philosophy rather thoroughly. You see, I suspected that he might be suffering from a mild case of philosophic schizophrenia—from a kind of split mentality. The reasons for this suspicion are herein recorded along with my detailed diagnosis. Like all diagnoses it is a subjective attempt at being objective. It is rendered only after consultation with persons whose expertise and skill in matters philosophic I hold in very high

esteem: Dr. James H. Robb, Dr. Patrick Coffey, Dr. Joseph O'Malley, Dr. Edward Rousseau, and Dr. Denis Savage.

Dr. Robb's enthusiastic cooperation in the investigation was particularly helpful. It was he who spent many hours helping me to pinpoint crucial information and to clarify its import. Doctors Coffey, O'Malley, Rousseau, and Savage studied the original report carefully and offered many helpful suggestions. To each of these men I am very grateful.

I wish also to thank the members of my community who offered assistance and support in myriad ways. To Sisters Agneta Buckley and Mary Jerome Rund I owe special thanks. And for help of all sorts, tangible and intangible, I am very grateful to Margaret Crowley, R.S.M., Mary Daly, R.S.M., Kathy Keenan, and Paul and Mary Byrne. Mrs. Thrall, who lived on a typist's alert for several weeks, also earned my deep appreciation.

I would be remiss if I did not share with you my sense of gratitude and indebtedness to Emmanuel Mounier himself. That his life, his writings, his history, have come into my life is an event and gift I cherish.

1. The Life and Works of Emmanuel Mounier

"The presence of Françoise! The story of our little Françoise who seems to glide through days without having any history. . . ." ¹ As he formed these words on a fresh page of his personal notebook, Emmanuel Mounier realized that no diary would ever hold the secrets of his little daughter's life; no friend would ever share her moments of excitement or of crisis. For her there would be no *now* charged with anticipations of the future or with gleeful recollections of the past. There would be no moments of decision—no history!

The date he had written above this entry was August 28, 1940. His daughter was more than two years old by this time and mentally crippled from the brain damage inflicted by a severe case of encephalitis. Mounier and his wife Paulette had anguished for months over the progressive deterioration of their only child. And now, as he reflected on "this miracle one day broken, this promise on which the door closed again, her smile abolished, her gaze distracted, and her hand without a project," he struggled for the meaning of his little Françoise. ²

Mounier had only recently returned home to his wife and daughter after eleven months in France's auxiliary service. His country was still numb and only slowly coming to feel the pain of its defeat by the German militarists and of its betrayal by French collaborators. The northern half of France was now under military occupation, the southern sector, where the Mouniers resided, governed by puppets of the Nazi regime. France's inner spirit, like Françoise's, was stifled and deprived of its powers of self-expression. "This little child, immolated day by day, was perhaps our very presence to the horror of the

time," Mounier wrote. And he drew his reflections to a close, promising to eschew any facile resignation to the destiny of his Françoise as he refused to accept the evils that consumed his France.³

Emmanuel Mounier was thirty-five years old at this time—a philosopher by temperament and education, a journalist by occupation, and until the war, director of one of France's leading intellectual reviews, *Esprit*. His strong, well-knit body and his thick, square hands belied his intellectual occupations and confirmed his claim of being a *montagnard*, or highlander.⁴ His appearance resembled the laborer's whose causes he had consistently espoused. With curly hair, blue eyes, and a square chin, he might have been handsome were it not for a disfigured right eye which had been blinded in a childhood accident.⁵

There was little about Mounier's history which resembled the doldrums of his daughter's. His life had up to this point been what he might have called an adventure in presence. In order to have a history, a person must be present to his world, Mounier had often insisted; that is, he must be able to respond to the world and to the persons around him.⁶ It is one's response that accounts for the uniqueness of his history, and in some sense, of his vocation. Each person is called out of a concrete situation to realize a destiny that he shares with all men. His response to the call or vocation must always be made in terms of his own circumstances and his own perspective on reality.⁷ Since these are continuous but also continually changing, new responses are constantly called for. What ensues is a dialogue with reality or what might be called the dialectic of personal history.⁸

Since personal history is one of the essential ingredients of history as a whole, it will be appropriate to review Emmanuel Mounier's own personal history, and to observe some of the influences which helped to shape his thought and action. It will be important, too, to notice the manner in which Mounier communicated his philosophy. Personalism, he insists, does not offer a system of answers, but rather a method for thinking and living—in short, a way of existing.⁹ It is the method of communicating his philosophy which, in fact, leads him to make

assertions about history that seem to be contradictory or at least inconsistent.

His Life

Born April 1, 1905 at Grenoble, Mounier was the son of a *petit-bourgeois* pharmacist. As a child, he had been timid, quiet, and an excellent student. His parents had encouraged him to become a doctor because they believed that an active profession would balance his "too meditative" temperament.¹⁰ Too reticent to tell them that he was not attracted by the medical profession, Mounier entered the University of Grenoble with the intention of becoming a physician. During his first three years he took courses which would eventually lead him to a degree in medicine; however, by the time he had reached his third year of study he was thoroughly dejected. Faced with the certifying examinations in chemistry during that third year, he became more and more depressed even to the point of contemplating suicide.¹¹

In late spring of that year (1925) Mounier made his first closed retreat. This was one of the turning points in his life. During the retreat he recalled the enthusiastic comments of some of his fellow students about philosophy courses taught at the University, by a Professor Chevalier. Chevalier had inspired his students with such a hearty respect for life that the disgruntled student of medicine wondered if *he* might not gain some new and more hopeful perspectives on life by studying philosophy. He decided to look up Chevalier, and to discuss the feasibility of redirecting his studies towards philosophy.¹² The consultation resulted in Mounier's withdrawal from the medical program and his immersion into the world of Descartes.¹³

There was a certain irony involved in this change of Mounier's occupation, for it was when he turned to the study most likely to nurture his "meditative tendencies" that he suddenly became a campus activist. He became a zealous member of a religious studies group that had been formed by Chevalier. He

also worked as one of the organizers of a series of public lectures given by Chevalier. These were open to anyone interested in learning something about the great philosophers with whom Chevalier was most familiar—Pascal, Descartes, Malebranche, and Bergson.¹⁴ In addition, Mounier undertook a promotional campaign for his professor by publishing an article on Jacques Chevalier's unusual talent for arousing the interest of the general public in profound metaphysical questions.¹⁵

Though his uncritical enthusiasm for Chevalier did not survive the test of time, Mounier always remained grateful to his teacher for the personal help he had given during his period of crisis.¹⁶ One of Mounier's earliest and least significant criticisms of Chevalier was that he failed to prepare his students properly for the rigors of the Sorbonne.¹⁷ When Mounier moved to Paris in 1927, he experienced a drastic social change for which he was totally unprepared. Mutual concern and personal rapport among faculty and students had been characteristic of the University of Grenoble. Such friendly relations were almost completely lacking at the Sorbonne. Paris was *la grande ville indifférente*.¹⁸

Jarred by the aloofness of the Parisians and particularly of the *universitaires*, Mounier experienced great loneliness. His natural reticence still interfered with his making friends easily, and he was unwilling to settle for a superficial camaraderie. The one person with whom he did become very close, George Barthelemy, became acutely ill during that same winter and died after a brief illness. George Barthelemy's death left Mounier with an intolerable sense of isolation. "Our friendship smiled at the future, for it was rich with promises," he wrote to his sister, Madeleine, "I feel again the emptiness of all that, and the bitterness, at twenty-two, of being without friends."¹⁹

In spite of the difficulty of this year, however, Mounier's sadness seems not to have approached the despair that he had experienced when he was studying medicine. Since that time he had begun to acquire a sense of Christian hope, of what he would later call "tragic optimism," so that permeating all his anguish there was now the growing conviction that suffering could be fruitful. He was able to acknowledge only a few days

after losing his friend that his days were rich because they were somehow showing him the ways of God. The thought of suicide was far from him now and he assured his former teacher, Chevalier, that though his days were painful, he would not want not to have lived them.²⁰

In July of 1928, Emmanuel Mounier took the competitive examinations leading up to the *agrégation*. Raymond Aaron received the highest scores; Mounier ranked second. He was twenty-three by this time and eager to expend some of his energy in activities of a more creative sort than was encouraged at the university.

The next step in his philosophical career was the writing of a thesis. Supported by a financial grant, Mounier became a *boursier de doctorat* and began to gather material for a thesis on the Spanish mystic, John of the Angels.²¹ Meanwhile he joined a club for young Catholic intellectuals called the *Davidées*, a group whose spirit was similar to that of the religious study group to which he had belonged in Grenoble. He described the rapport of the group in glowing terms:

One has the intimate assurance that no one will have to crush in himself any resistance, to justify the unjustifiable, to make pass for an article of faith some half-truths. You cannot imagine the joy with which I approached such a milieu.²²

The inspiration of the group, whose members included Jean Guilton, Paul Vignaux, and Jean Daniélou, came from two extraordinary women, Mlle. Silve and Madame Daniélou, the foundress of the Collège Sainte Marie de Neuilly, a school where Mounier would later teach.²³

At the request of the *Davidées*, Mounier wrote numerous articles for publication. Some of these appeared under his own name, some under the pen-name Jean Sylvestre. It is in these articles that one finds Mounier's earliest attempts to point up the value of living in an awareness of and openness to the intrusion of historical events.²⁴

Besides his pleasant association with the *Davidées*, Mounier also went regularly between 1928-1933 to the home of Jacques Maritain, who, with his wife Raissa, hosted monthly gatherings

of intellectuals and artists from every part of the world. Maritain's home had become a cosmopolitan center, a meeting place where Protestant and Orthodox churchmen, Catholic theologians, burgeoning political leaders, and humanistic philosophers gathered for frank and cordial dialogue.²⁵ It was here that Mounier came into contact with the Russian exile Nicholas Berdiaeff, a philosopher who later became closely associated with Mounier's Personalist movement. Here too, he met Gabriel Marcel, a philosopher whose thought greatly resembled his own. It seems likely that the two discussed some of the main themes of their writings—*body, freedom, possession, and vocation*—on these occasions.

During the Christmas vacation between 1928-1929 Mounier began to reread the works of Péguy. Just as his alignment with Chevalier had become a turning point in his life, so his desire for solidarity with Péguy brought him to a point of conversion once again.²⁶ Mounier found inspiration in Péguy's rebellious honesty, in his contagious spirit of hope, and in his passionate concern for the poor and neglected. He instinctively agreed with Péguy's criticism of the academicians.²⁷ "At a time when vocations are formed," Mounier later recalled, "I lived long months in intimate contact with his [Péguy's] works. . . ." "It [the study of Péguy] crystallized the entire extra-university part of my life; moreover, it gave a death blow to the university."²⁸

It is clear that it was as much Péguy's life as his writings that influenced Mounier. While still a student at the Sorbonne, Péguy had taken a leave of absence from the University, ostensibly to relieve his worsening eyesight. Actually it was to preserve an inner vision that he had withdrawn for a time. He did so realizing full well that he was placing his *agrégation* in jeopardy. After an absence of twelve months Péguy returned to the university with the manuscript of his first version of *Jeanne d'Arc*. Subsequently he left the Sorbonne with his *Jeanne d'Arc* instead of his *agrégation*. He had failed the examinations.²⁹

Following in the footsteps of Péguy, Mounier decided to set aside work on his thesis temporarily and to write a book

about which he also felt a certain sense of urgency.³⁰ He made arrangements with George Izard, a young law student, and with Marcel Péguy, Charles' son, to collaborate on a study of the thought of Charles Péguy. Jacques Maritain endorsed the undertaking and offered to have it published as a part of the collection *Roseau d'or*.³¹ The book, which appeared in 1931 as *La Pensée de Charles Péguy*, became the first book consecrated to the philosophy of Péguy, and opened up the way for the numerous other works which were to follow.³²

Mounier's work on Péguy was not the only project which interfered with the completion of his thesis, however. During the winters between 1929-1931, besides teaching philosophy at the Collège Sainte Marie de Neuilly and at the Lycée de Saint Omer, Mounier also worked with George Izard on a project which was destined to become his life's task and adventure. For this project too, Péguy was largely responsible. As Péguy had edited a review, *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, to express his convictions and to arouse others to share his human and social concerns, so Mounier and Izard hoped to create a new review which would give expression to what they called at that time *spiritualisme*. Izard describes the moment of decision which removed Mounier definitively from the academic scene and set him on the road to becoming an *éducateur* rather than a *professeur* or *universitaire*.³³

It was only in the street that we managed to see each other long enough to make this decision. I pointed out to Mounier that I could not undertake the editorship. And I will always hear him reply, without granting himself the right to hesitate: "Good! We are right and penniless. But it is only enterprises founded on poverty that succeed. I will give up the university and install myself in Paris. I have only to explain to my family, but I am sure they will understand. I will take the editorship—assuming there will be something to edit. At any rate, this cannot be worse than the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*."³⁴

The decision was one which Mounier seems never to have regretted.

Neither Mounier nor Izard envisioned their review as an extension of the *Quinzaines*, however. Their hope in founding

a review was not to imitate Péguy, but rather in some sense to recreate him.³⁵

In October, 1932 the new journal, *Esprit*, appeared for the first time, listing articles by such writers as Nicholas Berdiaeff, Denis de Rougemont, Jean Lacroix, and Emmanuel Mounier. The topics discussed in the first issue of the periodical ranged from the need for a new Renaissance to the superiority of the German cinema; from the political ramifications of communism and individualism, to the paintings of Picasso.

It was in the spirit of Péguy, the rebel and the Christian, that Mounier had launched *Esprit*. From the beginning he insisted that it was to be an intellectual journal dedicated to the constant search for truth through dialogue and through the presentation of divergent views.³⁶ It was, perhaps, his attempt to extend in print the kind of meetings of minds that he had found so stimulating in the gatherings of the *Davidées*, and of the groups which came together at the Maritain home.

The chief aim of the review was to modify the attitudes of two groups of thinkers whose vision of man and of reality were almost directly opposed to each other, viz., those whose intellectual formation had been exaggeratedly spiritualistic, and those whose concerns were excessively materialistic, that is, idealists and Marxists, respectively. Mounier joined the Marxists in denouncing the exaggerations of spiritualism, and he joined the idealists in pointing out the shortsightedness of those who looked to economics for all the answers to the human dilemma of the times.³⁸

It was the economic crisis brought on by the 1929 stock market crash which created Mounier's hope that these extremes could be modified. Those of the spiritualist tradition, viz., the philosophical idealists and most Christians, had been brought up short by the discovery that in spite of man's spiritual aspirations, he was quite reliant on social and economic factors which could be ignored only at the expense of his spiritual well-being. The materialists, on the other hand, were brought to see that despite the economic upheaval that had occurred, man was not entirely changed, and that it would take more than an economic revolution to transform him at the moral and spiritual levels.³⁹

Besides this main thrust, which was a negative approach to a positive understanding of the richness and complexity of the human person, there were also certain secondary currents with which *Esprit* was occupied. One of these was the promotion of a literature which, unlike the "gratuitous" literature of the previous decade, would be concerned about human problems and the human condition.⁴⁰ Another of the currents in *Esprit* was concerned for the rehabilitation of a vibrant Christianity.

Among the writers for *Esprit* there was a strong reaction against religious provincialism and against the indifference of confessional groups to concrete social problems. Many of the writers were incensed at the "dead letter" approach to life that was foisted off upon the naive as the way of Christian obedience. They were distressed that cultural expressions of the past were confused with eternal values. They deplored the absence of Christians from the political arenas where so many of the pressing issues of their times were settled. Above all, they resented the pseudo-Christianity which failed to take seriously the mystery of Incarnation—which failed to view the Church as the *living presence* of Christ in history.

Mounier believed that the most debilitating consequence of the Christian's confusion of eternal values with an attitude of a-temporality was the increasing solidification of Christianity with what he called the "*désordre établi*."⁴¹ The presumption that the established order was an expression of the will of God and that it was the guardian of Christian morality was a gratuitous and unjustifiable one, interfering with the progress of correcting inequities and overcoming the shortcomings built into the established order.

Closely connected with the dialogue carried on in *Esprit* among confessional groups was the unique development of a community between theists and atheists. It was neither an intellectual nor a religious dialogue, but a mutual concern for the human problems which had to be dealt with in some positive fashion that brought these two groups together at a time of intense polarization.⁴²

In its initial phase *Esprit* was, like most of the journals begun at this time, doctrinaire and negative in tone. It de-

nounced the "established disorder;" it denounced bourgeois values, and the capitalistic system; it was anti-rationalist, and anti-materialist. However, Mounier later insisted that its rejections were never pure refusals, but were "no's charged with love" and impregnated with something positive though not immediately perceptible.⁴³

For its first few years *Esprit* was chiefly concerned with the broad metaphysical and moral issues, e.g., the meaning of person, of community, of human presence; the relationship of Personalism to Marxism, to Liberalism, to Anarchy, and to Christianity.

In spite of its impressive list of contributors, Mounier's own work and thought dominated the review. In May of 1934 Mounier recorded in his personal notes:

Primard was right the other day—why did I protest?—when he told me that up to now *Esprit* was myself and my personal history.⁴⁴

Recanting almost immediately, however, he insisted that *Esprit* was actually the history of many who surpassed him both in genius and in sanctity. Nevertheless, Mounier realized that it was up to him to sustain, direct and centralize the review. He summed up his hope for himself in terms of his hopes for *Esprit*:

Left to myself I would spend my life making *Esprit* a pure witness. I would give my life that this testimony never cease. But to organize a stratagem, attacks, in a word, a revolution, I care nothing for that. I am like a calm steady force, radiating, not made for conquest, but for seduction; not for attack, but for being present.⁴⁵

Mounier had no desire to be a driving force in an irrational revolution. He wanted only to move others to a change of heart, to a *metanoia*, by attracting them—by eliciting from them a free response.

In 1933, the editor of the new journal moved to Brussels, Belgium, to take up a teaching post at the French Lycée there. For the next six years he traveled incessantly between Brussels

and Paris, directing the review from Paris and trying to sustain himself on an income that was in no way proportionate to the work he was doing.

In Brussels, Mounier met a Belgian school teacher, Paulette Leclercq—a woman who was to banish his sense of isolation and loneliness and to share in his personal history most intimately. Mounier discovered in Paulette an extraordinary courage and generosity. She seemed to liberate him from self-centeredness and to provide him with a paradigm of the personal communion and community about which he had often written. The two were married in 1935. Asked why he was not continuing his personal notebook during that year, Mounier explained: "Since I have known Paulette and since there are no secrets between us, even that which I in no way express to her seems to be liberated, no longer colliding with a wall of absence which makes it flow back onto itself."⁴⁶

From 1934 on, the political situation in Europe began to change rapidly. Faced with the riots of that year and with the gradual consolidation of the communist party, as well as with the continuing growth of the reactionary fascist leagues and the developing Nazi phenomenon, Mounier saw the growing importance of considering some short-term political problems. To be consistent with his Personalist principles and in order not to absent himself from his own times, Mounier had to take some definite positions *vis-à-vis* these problems, and often he had to do so "with a torn heart, for one can only have a divided heart when one must leave outside of himself a part of the truth."⁴⁷

Mounier was ever mindful of Péguy's distinction between *mystique* and *politique*.⁴⁸ He wanted his journal to be concerned with witness and with the *mystique* which should govern action. Nevertheless, he became convinced that a preoccupation with purity could become a paralyzing handicap, rooted as much in narcissism as in genuine love. Therefore, more and more he viewed his Personalism as a *pensée engagée*.⁴⁹

In spite of his willingness to face issues and to take a stand, Mounier did not want *Esprit* to become a political journal. The political vocation demanded certain talents that not everyone possessed.

The political vocation is a very precise vocation which demands certain gifts, as do painting and technics, etc. The evil of our time is that all the world by presumption believes itself apt, and by scruple of conscience called [to politics].⁵⁰

His own role, he believed, was to inform and nourish spiritually through *Esprit* those who did have a political vocation.⁵¹

It is notable that many youth groups (*les jeunes équipes*) were formed in the early 1930's, and that most of them were anti-rationalist, anti-materialist, anti-bourgeois, and in general opposed to everything that Mounier and his collaborators also opposed. These groups had founded their reviews in order to give vent to their criticisms of society; however, the basis of their unity was in most instances purely negative, so that when it became necessary to take any sort of positive stand on issues, their cohesion quickly disintegrated.⁵² While one by one these reviews began to collapse, *Esprit* and its movement gained strength. By the end of the decade, *Esprit* has become an influential and highly controversial publication. The only review of the 1930's whose negative beginnings were implicit affirmations, and the only review of this decade that took decisive stands on the issues of the time, *Esprit* was also the only review that remained after World War II. And if Mounier's critics are to be believed, the Personalism of *Esprit* came to have an astonishing influence on the religious and political situation in France for the next two decades.⁵³

Much of the success of *Esprit* was due to the positive elements underlying the review's direction and movement. During 1933-1934 Mounier spent a good deal of his time traveling throughout France, Switzerland and Belgium to establish personalist discussion groups called "Amis d'*Esprit*." Their aim was to draw up the principles of a personalist civilization and to see how these principles might be applied to basic societal structures. Each of these *Esprit* groups was concerned with a particular phase of the ensemble of interests discussed in the periodical. Many were formed on a professional basis, e.g., there were groups of philosophers, of artists, and of sociologists who were invited to pool their resources and to come to grips communally with the problems of their times. They looked for

practical solutions in the light of their personalist convictions.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 Mounier was mobilized and the publication of *Esprit* was temporarily halted. The advent of war brought with it not only the common miseries of the time but also the heartache of Françoise's illness. A few months after her birth in 1938, she was vaccinated and had a severe reaction which led to encephalitis. During the winter of 1939 her condition stabilized and doctors gave up all hope of a complete recovery.

By the following summer, the war was ostensibly ended. Mounier was demobilized in July and was able to take his wife and child to Lyons in the Southern Zone. There he made his living as a teacher at the Ecole Robin de Vienne. He was also able to resume the publication *Esprit* in the "free" zone under the censorship restrictions of the pro-Nazi Vichy government. Mounier had always been an outspoken critic of any sort of totalitarianism, so after some hesitation as to how he could best continue to battle it in his own homeland, he decided to attack in a more subtle manner. He adopted a policy which he later called "open clandestiness."⁵⁴ By selecting and reprinting literature written about situations historically parallel to those of his own time, he was able to level his criticism indirectly. However, by August of 1941, just about the time when his second daughter, Anne, was born, the censors suppressed the review because of its general tenor.⁵⁵

True to his conviction that every situation is offered to the person to become the stuff of his creativity, Mounier used the time now at his disposal to organize a center for clandestine studies. This was, as far as he knew, "the first federated organ of Resistance in the Southern Zone."⁵⁶ Its initial project was to revise the *Declaration of Rights* in order to make it a document appropriate to the times. After much deliberation, the revised *Declaration* was made available to the leaders of the *Combat* movement, an incipient Resistance group which became extremely powerful as the war continued. What connection there was between Mounier's study group and the *Combat* movement is not at all clear, but because his name appeared in some of the *Combat* papers, the Vichy government presumed that Mou-

nier was one of its leaders and produced a copy of the *Declaration of Rights* in its revised form as material evidence for their charge.⁵⁷

Mounier was imprisoned for subversive activity in January, 1942, and was held for five months without a trial. During this period and in the subsequent months of imprisonment, he worked on one of his most important books, *Traité du caractère*.⁵⁸ After five months imprisonment without a hearing, Mounier decided to protest the arbitrariness of the police action and the violation of his right to be brought to trial. He began a hunger strike, and for fifteen days pitted himself against the government officials, hoping to create in them a crisis of conscience, and to bring to bear on his case the pressure of public sympathy.⁵⁹ At the end of June, with Mounier's life in serious peril, the officials capitulated and offered him provisional liberty until his trial. After he was treated in the hospital, and physically rehabilitated, however, he was detained once again, and placed under house arrest in Lyons until mid-October when his trial began.

Mounier's trial lasted about two weeks. At the end of October, he was acquitted of the charges because of insufficient evidence. Subsequently he went with his family to Dieulefit in Drôme where he resumed his resistance activities by becoming a leader of the Maquis of Vercors.⁶⁰ There he continued to publish articles for resistance journals under the assumed name Leclerq.⁶¹ He lived in severe poverty during this time, finding his support primarily from his friends.

At Dieulefit, away from the stuffy atmosphere of the city, Mounier was able to complete his *Traité du caractère*, and, after rereading some works of Francis de Sales, Nietzsche, and Sartre, to write his *L'Affrontement Chrétien*, a work which examined sympathetically Nietzsche's criticisms of a saccharin Christianity.⁶²

When the war was finally brought to a close, Mounier resumed immediately the publication of *Esprit*. It was a surprise to no one that its energetic editor had it on the presses six months before any of the other reviews were ready to appear.⁶³ In that first post-war issue "while the ruins of France and the

passions of Frenchmen were still smoldering," Mounier denounced retaliatory action as puerile, and pleaded for sanity and for a spirit of forgiveness among his people.⁶⁴

After resuming publication of *Esprit*, Mounier was able to turn his attention to another project which had been pending since the outbreak of the war. The German invasion had disrupted Mounier's plans to establish a personalist community in one of the suburbs of Paris. After the liberation, he returned to Paris, and with several of his friends and collaborators—Paul Fraisse, Henri Marrou, Jean Domenach—he began a community of Personalists at Châtenay-Malabry.⁶⁵ Here his third daughter, Martina, was born in 1947.

In Paris the old *Esprit* group was reorganized and new members accepted.⁶⁶ Mounier invited the *Esprit* groups in all parts of Europe to hold congresses to confront the problems of post-war society and to determine how Personalism could contribute to the reconstruction of Europe. His own astonishing capacity for work was now matched by the demands made on him to present series of radio broadcasts for French and British audiences, to prepare conferences for *Esprit* congresses, for UNESCO, and for various international meetings.⁶⁷ All the while Mounier continued not only to edit his journal, but also to keep up a flow of new publications.⁶⁸

The pace Mounier tried to maintain for himself was utterly exhausting, so that his mental stamina soon outstripped his physical strength. By 1950, though he was only forty-five years old, he had already had two heart attacks. While recuperating from the first of these attacks in the fall of 1949, he wrote to a friend:

Taking periodically one's life in hand remains one of the joys of autumn. Others are reborn in spring. Since my childhood I have felt myself reborn in autumn.⁶⁹

But if he was reborn in autumn, he was to die with the arrival of spring.

On the evening of March 20, 1950, Mounier wrote a letter to Abbé Depierre, a friend and worker priest of the Montreuil region. In this letter he offered his support to the workers of

Montreuil who were on strike for a living wage. The following night (March 21-22) Paulette Mounier woke in the middle of the night. She heard her husband groan, then—nothing! He had died from a heart attack.

There was no doubt in the mind of anyone who knew Emmanuel Mounier that the fatal attack had been brought on by his superhuman efforts to be what he understood a person ought to be—generosity and self-donation. He was dead because he had completely spent himself within a short forty-five years.

The morning after his death, a check made out to Abbé Depierre was discovered on his desk.⁷⁰ The letter that was to accompany the check read in part: "I would like, with my wife, to give at least a little to prepare myself for the day when events will perhaps push us to give everything."⁷¹

His Works and Philosophical Influences

It would be impossible to discern *accurately* the influences which contributed to Mounier's Personalism and to rank the importance of these. "I do not know myself how to distinguish what has been given from what has been received," Mounier wrote in the Introduction to one of his early works.⁷² "The isolated signature of an author is always to some extent misleading. A whole segment of my generation is linked with mine."⁷³ It would, nevertheless, be valuable and possible to mention some of the men who have obviously had an effect upon Mounier and especially to note those who have influenced his view of history.

One can almost trace the time of Mounier's contact with various thinkers by arranging his writings in chronological order and noticing the predominant references in each of these. For that reason it is possible to combine remarks about some of his published works with a discussion of some of the influences affecting Mounier.

The milieu in which Mounier lived and the intellectual circles through which he moved have already been sketchily described. Mounier was in contact with most of the noteworthy

French thinkers among his contemporaries. Many of them were contributors to his review.

During the 1930's, a period which has been called the "Age de Péguyisme," Mounier's works abounded with references to both Bergson and Péguy.⁷⁴ Péguy's influence has already been mentioned. He provided the inspiration and the subject for Mounier's first book, *La Pensée de Charles Péguy*. The fact that Mounier's writings took the form they did—most of them were articles written for reviews and were only later collected for publication in book form—was also attributable in great part to Péguy.⁷⁵

Even prior to Péguy's influence, however, Henri Bergson's thought had made a deep impression on Mounier. In fact it seems to be the Bergsonism in Péguy that made the latter's thought so congenial to Mounier.⁷⁶

Mounier had become acquainted with the thought of Bergson during the first year of his philosophical studies. Chevalier had given a series of lectures on him during the winter of 1927, and he had also written a book entitled *Bergson* which Mounier helped to proofread in preparation for its publication.⁷⁷

At the heart of Bergson's philosophy was his distinction between time thought and time lived. Time thought, Bergson called abstract time; time lived, he called concrete time. Abstract time, according to Bergson, is the measure of motion as the physicist knows motion; it in no way reveals real duration or real becoming as these are experienced in consciousness. The function of abstract or symbolic time is the counting off of instances or homogeneous units of duration. The units do not bear the quality of what they count, they simply make it possible to count and thus to measure motion of *any* kind by a set of numbers.⁷⁸ For example, the clock will measure off sixty identical units in ticking off an hour, whether one is spending that time at the dinner table or in a dental chair. Abstract time measures each moment as if it were the same as every other moment. But the succession of real moments are, for the persons involved, not at all alike.

Concrete time, on the other hand, is concerned with the quality of the movement that is going on within a time span.

It is concerned with the lived or conscious experience of change and succession. In a very literal sense the experience of *what goes on* in consciousness, the experience of succession in an indivisible flux, is the experience of duration or of concrete time. This is known not by the intellect, which knows only abstract time, but by intuition, which is an immediate awareness of one's presence to himself and to the world.⁷⁹ *What goes on* in the conscious life of the person is always something new! No moment of consciousness—no moment of life is the exact repetition of any other moment, Bergson points out. Concrete time is, then, the elaboration of an *élan vital*—of a creative impulse.⁸⁰

Thus the living being has duration precisely because it is continuously elaborating what is new and because there is no elaboration without searching, and no searching without groping. Time is this very hesitation or it is nothing.⁸¹

Mounier will later sound much like Bergson when he points out that because he exists in time, because he has duration, man is neither wholly new at every instant, nor "continually equal to himself."⁸²

Since for the most part Mounier accepted Bergson's view of time, he was bound to find repugnant the scientism and determinism that prevailed in the Sorbonne while he was there. In a letter to Chevalier during his first year of study in Paris Mounier wrote:

I am decidedly incapable of the objective attitude of those young men who place themselves before problems as before a piece of anatomy and before their career as before a mechanism, rising methodically to the appointed peak.⁸³

From the beginning Mounier found himself in company with Chevalier and with Bergson in reacting to the deterministic views of the *Sorbonnards*.

This attitude was intensified, however, when Mounier began to read Péguy. Here was a Bergson with emotions. If Péguy had anything more to offer than Bergson, Mounier once noted, it was that he had carried the battle against mechanism and

scientific rationalism out into the public places, while Bergson delivered his telling blows only in a theoretical fashion and within the remote forum of the university.⁸⁴ In an article on Péguy's mediation of Bergson Mounier wrote:

At a time when the avarice of the world of money and of rationalism were desiccating the posterity of Christ, Bergson was almost for Péguy the most recent prophet of Johannism. Péguy was his captain; he led in Bergson's name the temporal battles. The first adversary: History! That of the Sorbonne, which passed along with its memos the length of an event instead of taking stock of it from within.⁸⁵

With a fury that Bergson could not have mustered, Péguy excoriated those technicians of history who tried to reconstruct it from a dead past and then to foist off their construction as a pattern for the future.

Instead of looking upon history as something lived, as something organic, the *Sorbonnards* viewed it as an entirely objective affair, wholly exterior and public. History was a factual account of a series of occurrences whose causes could, at least theoretically, be entirely accounted for. For the scientific historian man and nature were fantastically complex, but they were also *tout-fait*; they were complete, finished, incapable of any newness. It was this reduction of man to a mechanism which both Bergson and Péguy, and Mounier after them, saw as the great sin of rationalism.⁸⁶ In demolishing the props for the fatalistic complacency of the *Sorbonnards*, Bergson had struck at the central avarice of their world, viz., the avarice for security which made people "recoil before the task of being creative and before the danger of being free."⁸⁷

Because Bergson had assigned the knowing of material reality, i.e., reality as quantitative, to the intellect and the knowing of it spiritually or qualitatively to the intuition, he had been accused of anti-intellectualism, and of being an irrationalist. Mounier relates Péguy's polemical defense of Bergson. Challenging Bergson's critics for setting down arbitrary restrictions upon man's knowing, Péguy had queried: Why should a reason that is rigid be more reason than one which is supple? Why

should a flexible logic be considered less logical than an inflexible one? It is simply prejudice which moves one to prefer rigidity to suppleness. "It is as if one said that the mathematics of right angles is more mathematical than the mathematics of the curve."⁸⁸ It was surely not anti-intellectualism, nor irrationalism that Bergson was promoting, but a new rationalism which, because of its suppleness, could be more faithful to reality than could any rigid system.⁸⁹ Mounier's philosophy belonged to this new rationalism which allowed in principle for newness and invention and for flexibility.

In addition to *La Pensée de Charles Péguy*, three of Mounier's major works were published in the 1930's. Two of these were collections of articles previously written for *Esprit* or for other journals. *Révolution Personnaliste et Communautaire* was an analysis of the crisis of civilization and an attempt to show what aspects of *le désordre établi* would have to give way before the emergence of the new personalist civilization which he advocated.⁹⁰

Mounier was convinced that the old civilization was dead and that the hope of a new one rested on its being built upon the metaphysical reality of the person. Civilizations based on the exclusive value of the individual had failed as had those built upon the supremacy of the collectivity, the former because they had not satisfied man's communal needs, the latter because they did not allow for the person's uniqueness. Echoing Péguy, Mounier called for the establishment of a humanistic socialism.

In this work Mounier denounces the impersonal world of the "they" (*l'on*)—the mechanistic world which prides itself on its total objectivity and which prefers to deal with statistics than to deal with flesh and blood realities. He also describes and proscribes the world of "others like myself" (*nous autres*)—a world which demands that persons conform to the values and life style of a dominant group. This is the fascist world, more violent than the world of the "they" in that it does not ignore the person but crushes him by its peremptory demands.⁹¹ It is against such worlds, that is, worlds which prevent true personal community, that there would have to be a revolt. The revolution would not be the result of strategic power-plays,

however, but the result of personal conversions, for *revolution* connotes the constant turning over requisite for any civilization bent on passing beyond its own shortcomings and on moving ever closer to the realization of a true community of persons.⁹²

De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine, the third of Mounier's books, has been called one of the best treatises on Christian property in any language.⁹³ The first part of this work, which appeared as an article in *Esprit* in 1934, contains an analysis of *having* or *possession* which is quite similar to the phenomenology of *having* that appeared a year later in Gabriel Marcel's book *Being and Having*.⁹⁴ In this, as in many of his later works, Mounier propounds a metaphysic of the person which is very similar to Marcel's phenomenological analyses.⁹⁵

In this treatise, Mounier reiterates the classic view that property is a man's extension of himself. He notes that through the acquisition of property, the capitalist extends the sphere of his control. However, it is only a physical and not a personal extension of himself that occurs through his acquisition of property. He uses his property like a protective shell to make himself less vulnerable to the intrusion of a world which makes demands on the unprotected. By means of property the capitalist arranges for himself a spacious solipsism and becomes unavailable to the outside world. His property insulates and isolates him.⁹⁶

On the other hand, true personal possession involves the use of goods not for self-protection, but for self-exposure. As an extension of the *person*, and not simply of the body, it facilitates communication and the possibility of making oneself present to others. Personal property is the extension of one's being, not simply of his having. It facilitates the personal act of self-donation and generosity.⁹⁷

With the appearance of the *Manifeste au service du personnalisme* in 1936, the increasing influence of Karl Marx becomes apparent in Mounier's writings. It was at this time that the early writings of Marx had begun to appear in translation, and that interest in the humanistic elements of his earlier thought had increased. The *Manifeste* is a recapitulation of personalist principles and outlook. In it Mounier emphasizes the pluralism

within Personalism and explains that the term signifies not so much a set of doctrines as a convergence of wills.⁹⁸

One of the areas of concern and commitment common to Marxists and Personalists is the conviction that Western civilization is no longer a viable structure. This means that there is need for a revolution.

We firmly believe—and in this we approach Marxism—that an incarnate spirituality, when menaced in its body, has the primary duty of freeing itself and of freeing man from the oppressive civilization . . .⁹⁹

The oppressive civilization to which Mounier here refers is capitalistic in structure, liberal in ideology, and bourgeois in ethics.¹⁰⁰

The new civilization, centered on the person, must be metaphysically oriented. Mounier refuses to acknowledge that a new man and a new civilization more perfect than the old one can be effected simply by changing or improving the economic circumstances of the collectivity.

Only a program that looks beyond effort and production, a science that looks beyond utility, an art that looks beyond agreement, and finally a personal life devoted to a spiritual reality that carries each one beyond himself—are capable of lifting the weight of a dead past and of giving birth to a truly new order.¹⁰¹

Obviously, then, a revolution based on class warfare cannot be the foundation of a more perfect civilization. Still, in all honesty, Mounier must admit that Marxism holds out more hope to the poor and the oppressed than the emasculated Christianity which was the only Christianity the poor knew.

Mounier believes that there are some aspects of Marxism which are quite compatible with Christianity.¹⁰² With Marx he affirms that man's destiny is to recreate and humanize nature and to move progressively towards a perfect community which embraces all men. The Christian ought to join Marx in his denunciation of spiritual evasions and escapism, for fundamental to Christianity is the recognition that redemption is the fruit of

Incarnation, and intrinsic to Catholic Christianity is the insistence that material reality mediates the life of the spirit.¹⁰³

In reacting to the spiritual evasions of those who were concerned with interior life and only with that, Marxism had called for man's exteriorization, for the pouring of human energies into the transformation of nature. There was a danger in this too—at least Mounier thought so—for it was just as possible for man to alienate himself in things as it was to alienate himself in dreams.¹⁰⁴

The war-plagued years of the 1940's saw a shift in emphasis in Mounier's writings. His interest in Marxism was not diminished, but a growing interest in Existentialism and in psychology appeared, complementing the broad sweep of his thought with some interesting phenomenological reflections. In 1932, Mounier had set out with the hope of making spiritual life revolutionary. During the 1940's he found himself hoping to make the revolutionary spiritual.¹⁰⁵

Mounier turned to a study of the interior life in his *Traité du caractère*.¹⁰⁶ It has already been mentioned that this work, considered by many his masterpiece, was written for the most part during the long months of his imprisonment. The book is to some extent a pioneer venture in characterology. A number of articles on this subject had appeared in the late 1930's, but no extensive work had been completed until a short time before Mounier finished his treatise. Le Senne's characterology, the first broad-scale study of its kind, appeared while Mounier was still in the process of revising the notes for his work.¹⁰⁷

Mounier distinguishes characterology from psychology by assigning to the latter the study of the psychic mechanisms employed by persons and to the former the study of the person employing them. Mechanisms are at the disposal of persons, but they are employed in a variety of ways. It is the way they are used that provides the general direction or orientation that a free person gives to his life.

The movement of the personality utilizes a rich assortment of mechanisms, but it is precisely the task of the characterologist to determine in what way it is personal, that is to say, in what way it surpasses and dominates mechanism.¹⁰⁸

The result of this effort is a massive study reflecting the author's vast erudition as well as his keen insights into human behavior. It is one of the few books published by Mounier that was not a compilation of previous articles, though it did grow from a series of notes which Mounier had intended to incorporate into a small book. The completed work is a volume of over nine hundred pages. It was so popular that more than two hundred thousand copies were sold in France.

L'Affrontement Chrétien, another of Mounier's works written during his exile at Dieulefit, manifests a sense of outrage at the distortions of Christianity which had moved Nietzsche to ridicule it.¹⁰⁹ His anger was not directed at Nietzsche, but at those Christians who had so adulterated the strength and joy of the Good News, that it could not but become the object of scorn. The Gospel had been reduced to an individualist's sop, used for reassuring bourgeois complacency—giving a false sense of security. It could hardly be recognized as a proclamation about generosity, freedom, suffering, and creation. Some had even made of it a gloomy asceticism that bore more of the message of Jansenius than of Christ.¹¹⁰ To contrast the life of the authentic Christian with that of the pseudo-Christian whom Nietzsche had assailed with withering deprecations, Mounier describes the attitudes and convictions of Francis de Sales. Nietzsche's scorn becomes Mounier's exhortation:

Better songs would they have to sing for me to believe in their Savior; more like saved ones would his disciples have to appear unto me!¹¹¹

He closes the work with a eulogy of *force*, which he sees, in its richest sense, as banishing avarice and expressing magnanimity and amplitude of being. Only Christianity has sufficient magnanimity and force to humanize the world.

Not long after he had read Sartre's *L'Être et le Néant*, Mounier began to write his *Introduction aux Existentialismes*.¹¹² In this work he examines some of the recurrent themes which appear in the writings of men like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Marcel, Sartre, Heidegger, and Jaspers. Among the themes discussed

are freedom, responsibility, creativity, alienation, conversion, transcendence, all of which were concordant with Mounier's concern to make the revolution spiritual. He saw Existentialism as providing the polarity necessary to keep Marxism in check and to maintain the triple dimension of the person, viz., his exteriority, his interiority, and his transcendence. The latter two dimensions were ignored by Marxist ideology.

In 1946 a collection of three of Mounier's earlier treatises was published under the title, *Liberté sous conditions*.¹¹³ Besides his treatise on property, this book also included a discussion of anarchy and personalism and a lengthy article, originally written in English under the title "Catholic Personalism."¹¹⁴ The latter work was Mounier's attempt to show the harmony of the personalist faith with the faith vision of Christianity.

During this post-war period Mounier was often consulted by those who were working for the reconstruction of Europe. His studies in personalist sociology, published in 1948 as *La Petite Peur du XXe siècle*, were originally conferences given between 1946-1948 at UNESCO meetings in Paris, at the International Conference in Geneva, and at the Week of Sociology in Paris.¹¹⁵ These conferences dealt with social and technological problems and with the Christian view of history and of progress.

In this collection the influence of two French Jesuits comes to the fore: P. Teilhard de Chardin, and P. Henry de Lubac.¹¹⁶ While neither of these men seem to have transformed profoundly Mounier's vision of history, both provided him with clarification and support from their own disciplines, paleontology and theology respectively. P. de Lubac's work on the corporate destiny of man had disentangled some of the theological complications arising from the view that creation is still going on.¹¹⁷ Teilhard seems to have reinforced and enriched Mounier's notion of the unity of History, especially in the dimension of cosmic History.¹¹⁸

Prior to the publication of *La Petite Peur du XXe siècle*, Mounier's work *Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme?* appeared.¹¹⁹ This was a restatement of the aims and of the historical position of the personalist movement. Because Mounier saw this move-

ment not as a system but as a "certain outlook on human problems" and as a means of accentuating the demands of the historical situation, he felt the need to point out that certain shifts of emphases were required which were appropriate to the altered situation. In the *Manifeste au service du personnalisme* Mounier had clarified the Personalist position *vis-à-vis* Marxism, rationalism, and liberalism. Now he must situate it in regard to the changing reality of communism and *vis-à-vis* the mood of Existentialism. "It is not sufficient to say: 'person, community, total man,' in order to insert Personalism into the historic drama of our age," he wrote. "We must also say: 'end of Western bourgeois society, introduction of socialist structures, the proletarian role of initiative.' Year by year we must formulate our analysis of forces and possibilities more precisely."¹²⁰

The last book published by Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, was again a restatement of his philosophy, but this work was by no means a simple repetition of the work just described.¹²¹ It was not so much concerned with the situation into which the personalist movement was to be inserted as it was concerned to present in some positive form the most fundamental principles of the personalist way. The work is a concise summary handled at the metaphysical level. Published just a few months before his death, it is appropriately Mounier's last word, since it sets forth the elements of his thought which will undoubtedly be most enduring.

Methodology

Some of Mounier's commentators have suggested that his Personalism is not really a philosophy, in spite of his explicit statement in the last of his works that it is a philosophy and not just an attitude.¹²² It would serve no purpose to dispute the matter here, but it can be a help to know what occasioned these disclaimers.

There are two reasons why some have denied that Personalism is a philosophy. The first of these is that it is not a complete or finished system. It does not render solutions to problems;

it provides only a way of coming to grips with them. Personalism is replete with ambivalences; it takes no dogmatic stands; and it brushes aside any philosophy which has attempted to give a comprehensive explication of reality. "Its [Personalism's] central affirmation being the existence of free and creative persons, it introduces into the heart of its construction a principle of unpredictability which excludes any desire for a definitive system."¹²³

The Personalist does not deprecate structure or systematization, but he does deplore the tendency of philosophers to make reality fit into preconceived schemas, thus relinquishing the lure of discovery for the challenge of construction.¹²⁴ The Personalist does resent the truncated rationalism that claims to give a full and complete account of reality, because its systematization is based on the presupposition that reality is complete, finished, *toute-faite*. With Péguy, Mounier would argue that a philosophy with a progressive and flexible structure is no less a philosophy than one which has a rigid and inflexible one.¹²⁵

Another reason why Mounier's Personalism is sometimes dismissed as less than a philosophy—or more than one—is that it makes no pretense of giving a purely theoretical and unbiased view of reality. Personalism does not attempt to be entirely objective. It cannot be understood or appropriated through cogitation alone. The first requisite of Personalism is commitment, and commitment is never neutral. It is a commitment which initiates and directs each one's thinking, and it is in a commitment that thought terminates.¹²⁶ Hence the starting point of Personalism is "I love, therefore being is," and not "I think, therefore I am."¹²⁷ The ability to think is not what makes man to be an intelligent being, but the ability to direct and dispose of his thought and to use it for his own purposes.¹²⁸ That is why Mounier will describe Personalism as a "convergence of wills" rather than as a system of thought.¹²⁹

Although the concerns of Personalism range from the principles of pedagogy to the emancipation of women, all of its interests, whether moral, aesthetic, political, or what have you, are metaphysically oriented. Mounier will point out, for instance, that civilization is not simply an advancement in social culture;

it is "first of all a metaphysical response to a metaphysical call, an adventure in the eternal order of things. . . . There is no human civilization or culture that is not metaphysically oriented."¹³⁰

It has already been pointed out that Personalism's central affirmation is the existence of free and creative persons. The person stands at the summit of being, and all being is subject to a process of personalization.¹³¹ Hence, the metaphysics of the person will provide the ultimate criteria for all *praxis*. What the being of the person is will provide the regulative principles for politics, ethics, aesthetics, etc. An attempt to elaborate a metaphysic of the person would be premature here. However, a few cursory lines may help to make clear something about Mounier's methodology.

One of the things that can be said about the being of a person is that it is a *being towards*; it is a presence to other persons and things.¹³² To be present is to be in relation to another, to be confronted with something or someone which is *not* I. The opposition and negation involved in presence gives rise to a dialogue or a movement that is dependent upon oscillation for its forward thrust. Metaphysically this dialogue brings about a progress in being which we call becoming. (This will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.) In philosophy, the best way of reproducing or representing this dialogue within being is through dialectic.

Dialectic involves taking one side of an issue and then another. The dialectician exhibits a certain ambivalence when he thinks or speaks or writes, because he knows the polarity and tension within being, and he knows that both sides or each pole of the dialectic are necessarily reliant on its opposite. By laying stress on one side and then on the other, progress is made. Analogous is the physical necessity of muscle tension or opposition for the motion of the body. Perhaps a clearer analogy can be drawn from the action of pedalling a bicycle. In order to make a bicycle move forward one must press down on one pedal as far as it will go and then place stress on the opposite pedal which has been hoisted by the depression of the first one. The up and down movement of pedalling creates

another movement that transcends the first two. Thus the bicycle and its rider are propelled forward to the point of destination. Similarly, the exchange within a dialogue causes a transcendent "vertical" motion that in the case of a thinker moves him towards a conclusion, and in the case of the person, moves him towards the destiny to which he directs himself.

The Personalist dialectic traffics between the dialectical idealism of Hegel and the dialectical materialism of Marx. There is a sense in which it might be said that Mounier has taken the syntheses of these two men and made of them the poles or antitheses from which he proceeds to his own integral realism. Mounier views the person as an incarnate spirit having a material pole and a spiritual pole, each of which requires the other.

Because of this dialectical methodology, Mounier has often been called a philosopher of ambivalence.¹³³ His ambivalence is not a state of confusion but one of comprehension. The dialectic encompasses both the affirmations and negations—the *yes* and the *no*. Mounier insists, however, that in this *yes* and *no* of the dialectic, one must never lose sight of the fact that it is the *yes* that is most important.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the dialectic usually begins with a negation.

The first element of the dialogue is that of opposition. . . . Every great discovery of the mind, said Bergson, starts with a *no*. Yet this *no* is already framing the affirmation which will grow from it, like the plant from its seed. Only those who have never experienced the dialectic of discovery will reproach young men of twenty for the negative character of their first statements of positions.¹³⁵

One can see from this statement not only why Mounier has been called a philosopher of ambivalence but also why his is a *pensée engagée*. Whether he is at the affirmative or at the negative stage of the dialectic, he will continue it only by a constant decisiveness in which both the *yes* and the *no* are expressions of his commitment.

There are several dangers in accepting a dialectical methodology, Mounier points out. It is possible, for instance, that one

might allow the emphasis to fall not on the *yes* of the dialectic—not even on the *no*—but rather on the moment of alternation. In that case one remains in a state of hesitancy and indifference and he betrays any possibility of commitment. Another danger is that of viewing the dialectic as an automatic process. To view the progress of the dialectic as mechanical rather than as a creative human project, is to strip the person of his dignity as a creator and to risk limiting thereby his decisive initiatives within history. The third and last danger of the dialectic against which Mounier warns is the susceptibility of falling into eclecticism. Just as a genuine dialogue requires attentiveness on the part of those engaged in conversation so that there can be some unity and cohesion—some genuine response and interaction—so the movement in a dialectic must exclude irrelevant and extraneous matters. Genuine response requires alertness and the recognition of that with which one is confronted so that one may react appropriately.¹³⁶

Naturally his dialectical approach affects Mounier's style of writing. The fact that the heart of the dialectic is the affirmation rather than the negation lends an optimistic tone to his writing. The dynamic character of the dialectic is reflected in the vigor and enthusiasm with which he expresses himself. However, in his *Manifeste au service du personnalisme*, Mounier cautions that "enthusiasm can make up for everything that is lacking; it gives tone and breadth and force to the most futile agitation."¹³⁷ This comes as a fair warning to his own readers, for one can be carried away by Mounier's enthusiasm, and can find himself merely skimming the surface of his thought in an exhilarating rush without stopping long enough to penetrate its depths.

There is an elusive character to Mounier's thought. The fluidity and dynamism of his style mirror well the reality which he is characterizing. He does not attempt to write with perfect lucidity and precision, for to do so would be to betray or to ignore the element of mystery that makes the personal universe the locus of a great adventure. Another feature of Mounier's style is his tendency to make climactic statements inconspicuously. Some of his most important statements and some of his

most pregnant assertions are made without appropriate build-up or emphasis. The final synthesis of a dialectical procedure can slip by unnoticed, not so much because it is without impact, but because the whole advance is so powerful that the synthesis is not sufficiently differentiated. The dialectic seems to come to no climax because it moves along a plateau. On the other hand, there are, as one of Mounier's admirers has put it, "flashing intuitions, the moment of pure wisdom in Gallic crispness" in places where one would least expect them.¹³⁸ The dispersion of Mounier's insights leaves his commentator with the apprehension that he may have by-passed some unset gem.

The Problem

By this time it will come as no surprise to the reader that Emmanuel Mounier's writings and thought manifest a certain ambivalence with regard to the meaning of *history*. At least one of his commentators has insisted that there is a "radical conflict" between the Mounier who holds that history has a significance and a direction, and the Mounier who insists that "if the meaning of history could be written in advance, there would be no freedom."¹³⁹ The former view is presented by Mounier in one of his late works where he contrasts the Greek view of history with the Christian view, which was also his own:

To affirm that there is *a (une)* history is to affirm that the ensemble of events which concern man, or perhaps the ensemble man-nature, is not a pure chaos, a history of madmen, but that it reveals a continuity and in the double acceptation of the word a "*sens*": a direction and a significance.¹⁴⁰

If, however, Mounier sees history as revealing a *sens*, its meaning is somehow being given! What then, of man's freedom?

And what of man's freedom in the face of this similar assertion, made in one of Mounier's earliest works?

It is the event which by violence penetrates us and carries us away, and thrusts us transfigured there where we did not know

In his *Traité du caractère*, Mounier gives a long list of examples of how people sometimes maintain ambivalent or contradictory patterns of behavior. With a certain optimism he notes that "even in patterns of contradiction, there is a minimum of clarity if not of explanation."¹⁴⁸ It is with a similar optimism that this writer hopes to find a minimum of clarity in what Emmanuel Mounier understood history to be.

how to go when we composed the ways. The revelation of the universe is, here again, terminated in a gift.¹⁴¹

Here again, the meaning of the historical event is given to man. How, then, can history be the "co-creation of free men"?¹⁴² On the one hand Mounier insists that the refashioning of history is man's paramount task; on the other, he speaks of a "destiny fed from the springs of God's design."¹⁴³

Within this tension there is another one, no less confusing. Let us accept that there is one history and that it has a meaning. How can one come to know its significance? Mounier has already suggested that the "event penetrates us," that the "ensemble of events" or the "ensemble man-nature . . . reveals a *sens*." Elsewhere, however, Mounier has stated that "only a consciousness of the finished totality of history can give the meaning of the events of history."¹⁴⁴ How can events convey the meaning of history when it is only by knowing the meaning of history already that one can understand the events within it?

What then of the ensemble man-nature? Does it reveal the significance of history? Mounier does not view nature as something wholly given and complete either. Nature is, in fact, in process of humanization or of personalization.¹⁴⁵ Man is not only intent upon transforming nature around him, he is in the course of constructing his own nature. Human nature is an "artifice," Mounier asserts, one which will be complete only when all men have made their contribution to its development.¹⁴⁶ "The human absolute is the totality of human history;" hence, only when it has been completed—only when history has been brought to its fullness—will there be any possibility of knowing what human nature truly is.¹⁴⁷ How, then, will it teach us the significance of history?

The problems posed above indicate that it is not easy to understand what Emmanuel Mounier understood history to be. He seems to have been well aware of the contradictions and ambivalences in his statements about it and to have preferred to maintain these even at the cost of perfect consistency. But, how is one to understand him, or better, how is one to understand history as he understood it?

In his *Traité du caractère*, Mounier gives a long list of examples of how people sometimes maintain ambivalent or contradictory patterns of behavior. With a certain optimism he notes that "even in patterns of contradiction, there is a minimum of clarity if not of explanation."¹⁴⁸ It is with a similar optimism that this writer hopes to find a minimum of clarity in what Emmanuel Mounier understood history to be.

2. A Confrontation: History and Nature

Since to discern what Emmanuel Mounier understands history to be is the whole purpose of this study, a definition of *history* would be premature at this point. Nevertheless a discussion of the metaphysics of history requires some specification of the object under consideration. What does the term *history* connote? Emmanuel Mounier has himself described a development in the meaning of the term—a development contingent upon man's changing views of time and of nature. It will be helpful to survey these various views of history, of time and of nature, and to see how they have led to modern concepts of history. It will be important too, to notice the influence that the theory of biological evolution has had upon the developing idea of history. Finally, some attention should be given to that faith in progress which permeates the Christian view of history.¹

A History of History

In the beginning of his essay "Christian History," Mounier points out that mankind has had to undergo a development in its consciousness of time—a development analogous to that which occurs in the growth and maturation of each individual person.² Just as a child is incapable of comprehending large spans of time and of relating events and movements constitutive of history, so in its infancy and early childhood was mankind. But the maturation characteristic of individuals has also been characteristic of humanity. Man has been developing a sense of history.³

As he surveys primitive views of time, Mounier finds that most men of antiquity were resentful of time, and indifferent to history. The Chinese, the Hindus, and the Greeks all considered time, which is the matrix of history, to be an irrational element within reality and a serious imperfection of being. This was so because time involved change or movement, and movement prevented things from being eternal. Since true being was eternal, change could only be viewed as a digression from being and as a decline towards nothingness.⁴

Looking to the history of the Far East, Mounier discovers that the only dimension of time which had any value there was the past. The Taoist and the Confucian were encouraged to live by the past because their origin lay somewhere within it, and because being was richest at its source. Intent upon deleting all human initiative from events, they were concerned to live by history but not to make it.⁵

Among the sages of India there was even less concern for the meaning of time and history than among the Chinese and the Greeks. "Indian thought and spiritual wisdom are not concerned with time, desire, action, or history," Mounier reports. "All of these and cosmic existence itself are an illusion."⁶

Content with the most summary reviews of the meaning that time and history had for ancients of the Far East, Mounier offers more detailed analyses of the Greeks' reflections on these enigmas. The Ionians apparently appropriated their doctrine of cyclic time from earlier Mesopotamian civilizations. They adopted the idea of the Great Year and of perpetual return in an effort to "neutralize the irrationality of history." "Greek thought denied with all its strength both time and movement," Mounier records.⁷ The Greeks valued what was changeless and eternal. But time which is a flux, does have a way of becoming eternal, "that is by flowing in a closed circuit, ceaselessly returning on itself."⁸ This image of an "eternal" time was concordant with their supposition that the universe was also eternal and complete.

One of the results of this cyclic view of time was the doctrine of perpetual return. Most of the significant Greek thinkers taught that every temporal event would be repeated *ad infinitum*.

Even the opinions of the philosophers according to Aristotle, will reappear "not once, nor twice, nor a given number of times, but to infinity," (Met. I, 3) and he has no difficulty in accepting that the Trojan War should be endlessly repeated. (*Problemata* I, 2, 3, 916-918) We find the same belief in the Pythagoreans and the Stoics. "When the cycle of the Great Year is completed," declared Chrysippus, "Dion will be here again, the same man in the same body, except perhaps for a few details, such as the wart on his nose."⁹

The idea of cyclic time and of perpetual return may seem ridiculous and constricting to contemporary man who has long conceived of time as a line extending before him to infinity. Nietzsche, with his recent version of eternal return, is the first among the moderns to have rediscovered the feelings of ennui, of poverty, and of avarice generated by this Greek cosmos.¹⁰

Given the Greek image of time, the possibility of progress or of a design for the totality of happenings is precluded.¹¹ Design and progress require a motion in which the beginning and the end do not coincide. A plan, Mounier declares, involves an absolute beginning, progress towards some end, and the end itself in which the plan is consummated.¹² To those contemporary thinkers who object that man's creativity is quashed if history is the unfolding of a preconceived design, Mounier recommends a pensive look at the Greek universe. Not only will they find the absence of design or plan, but they will also find that in a world where all design is banished, creativity is banished too. Novelty cannot appear in a world that does not value time.¹³

Though the problem of conceptualizing time appears to be a highly theoretical one, Mounier points out that its solution exercises a profound influence on the formation of practical attitudes. With their cyclic image of time, the Greeks were able to assume one of two stances: they had the option of hoping for an eventual escape from the monotony of time, or of resigning themselves to live with its irrationality.

Either one must escape from this deceptive and purposeless temporality into the contemplation of an immobile eternity—this is Platonic flight into idealism, and the refusal of insertion

—or, in the historical absence of hope, to accept a disillusioned pessimism, the deep and burning pessimism of the Greeks.¹⁴

Neither of these alternatives allows for a positive philosophy of history. And since Plato's offer of escape from time could never provide permanent relief—one fall into time was bound to be followed by another—Mounier sees little reason to prefer this "hopeful" attitude to the pessimistic one of the Greek fatalists.¹⁵

Though he makes no effort to disguise his abhorrence of their cyclic view of time, Mounier pays tribute to the Greeks for having discovered eternity, which "delivered man from the blind grip of the sensual and ephemeral."¹⁶ Nevertheless, the Greeks' failure to discover the value of time or, as Mounier is fond of saying, of "eternity in time" was as dramatic and as serious a shortcoming as was their elucidation of the eternal an expression of their genius.¹⁷

As he skims across the period of antiquity Mounier discovers that Lucretius, a Roman philosopher, was the only thinker among the ancients who seems to have recognized any sort of unified temporal growth.¹⁸ Lucretius saw history as the record of a transition in which man was gradually passing over from a state of primitive and brutal independence to a living shared with other men. Communal life was gradually increasing with the passage of time; it was cultivated by language, by art, by social organization, and by industrial exchange. However, even this view of time and of history is one which Mounier considers meaningless, because meaning must involve purpose, and there was no purpose governing the movement which Lucretius described. It simply followed the law or patterns of falling atoms. Though history had a real beginning, in this instance it had no consummation, because Lucretius held that in the end the world would simply be reabsorbed into heat. His was a quasi-prospective view of history; it gave only the appearance of being future-oriented.¹⁹

The only genuinely prospective view of history which occurs in the period of antiquity, Mounier finds not in a philosophy, but in the religion of a remote and politically insignificant

Semite tribe.²⁰ Those who counted themselves among the sons of Abraham believed that there was only one God and that he was absolute and creative. The Jews believed that their God, whom they called Yahweh, had become actively involved in their temporal affairs. Not only had he created the universe and everything in it, he had also remained provident for it.²¹ Jews believed that the world had a real beginning, and that it was directed towards a definite end. They believed that temporal events were unique and unrepeatable and that history manifested and in some way promoted Yahweh's plan to increase their freedom.

Unlike the Hindus, Greeks, Confucians and Taoists, the Jews thought of time as the dimension in which their lives would find meaning.²² The Jews insisted that God had made a covenant with them and that by this covenant he had assured them of the advent of a better world. Their faith in the coming of a Messianic Kingdom made them an expectant people—a people who looked to the future rather than the past. For them the present and the past received their meaning from the future—from the end time which was slowly and in enigmatic fashion being realized. Their eschatological view of history gave particular events a universal meaning—a moral and spiritual significance.²³

The Jews were the first people to insist that there was only one history embracing the whole universe. For them the unity of history and the uniqueness of God were inextricably bound up. Their belief in a universal history was a direct consequence of their monotheism, Mounier claims, and though he does not explain why, it is not difficult to discern the reason.²⁴ As long as men believed in a plurality of gods, they would believe also in a plurality of histories. Whether conflict or cooperation was the rule among the gods, historical events would result from a plurality of divine wills. However, in a world dominated by a single deity, all events would be unified and would somehow fall under a single dominion. The working out of history would no longer be a matter of chance; it would no longer be a manifestation of the interaction of the gods, but it would manifest the will of the one God, or result from the interaction of men

and God. Should the latter be true, and the Jews believed it was, history would still be unified, for there would be a common element in every event, a unifying bond, viz., God's providential presence and action. "By clearing the ground of animism, monotheism made room for religion in spirit and in truth, but also for a technical analysis of a world directed by reason, not governed by fantasies or djinns, but left by God to run its own adventure!"²⁵

Eventually, Christianity inherited the Jewish tradition and transmitted its monotheism and its eschatological view of history to the Western World. Christians, however, believed that with the coming of Jesus, the Messianic Kingdom was initiated. Naturally this belief profoundly affected their view of time and of history. Mounier describes the impact of their faith in Christ thus:

For the Jews the future was nothing if it was not the expectation of the Messiah. Now comes someone who persuades them he is the Messiah. For the Christianized Jew the future collapses under the weight of revelation and he is naturally led to believe that history is not only consummated, but effectively terminated by this event.²⁶

With the second coming of Christ imminent and with history all but complete, it seemed to these Judaic Christians that time could no longer have any value.

Mounier is quick to point out that the sense of historical completion experienced by the early Christians was short-lived, noting, too, that it was history itself that revealed to them their "hazardous" miscalculations of divine timing.²⁷ In his eagerness to show that history remained a central value within Christianity, Mounier's review of history verges on a polemic. He points out that prior to the Incarnation, the Messianic Kingdom had never been envisioned as a realm beyond time or history. For the Jew, looking to the end, time had not meant anticipating an existence that was timeless, but expecting a time when all that was imperfect would give way to all that was perfect. The end time was to be a period of fulfillment, having duration and a sense of "expectancy, of continuity, and of accomplishment."²⁸

True, the Jewish version of the Kingdom was spiritualized and interiorized in Christianity, but the Christian did not think of spirit as divorced from matter; he did not envision a Platonic Kingdom where eternity drained time of its value and significance. "Christ's transcendence would indeed be a rigid and avaricious transcendence, if, after him, history had substantially nothing more to say."²⁹ Although from God's side the outcome of history had been settled by the Incarnation, the real value of history had not been lost.³⁰

To show that Christianity did not reject temporal newness and that "the promise of Christ introduces an inexhaustible novelty into the web of time," Mounier cites passages from St. Paul and from the Fathers of the Church which emphasize that Christians are called to bring forth the New Man and the New Creation.³¹ A duration without creation would be meaningless:

A duration which could not be creative, in which the future would be mathematically decided from the outset, is an unthinkable duration. And those Christian doctors who are most disposed to accentuate the transcendence of God, notably St. Paul and St. Augustine, insist, do they not, on the idea that in the world renewed by Christ, all things are at each instant new?³²

The New Man does not preexist in some divine plan that is already entirely determined and ready to unfold in time. This would reduce men to simple functionaries or executors of a design in no way theirs.³³ Man is himself a co-creator. He re-creates himself and the entire universe. This activity is the stuff of history.

If some Christians eventually lost sight of the central significance of history to Christianity, it was perhaps because the heritage of Greco-Latin philosophy became confused with, and taken for, the Christian mysteries. As the Platonic and Aristotelian interpretations of reality began to mingle with the Christian tradition, an unhealthy syncretism occurred. Mounier recounts the results: the eternal ideas of Plato became the eternal verities of the Word; the natural law of Aristotle became the

exigency of the law of Christ to love. Classical philosophy's a-temporal absolutes, whether Pure Act or Infinite Goodness, all became confused with the personal God of Christianity.³⁴ Religious absolutism distorted the historical character of Christianity and eventually engendered a revolt.

During the 19th century an intense opposition to religious absolutism arose and history again emerged as a positive value. However, by this time the confusion of classical philosophy with Christian doctrine had become so congealed that many Christians feared the historical point of view as "the most immediate danger to true knowledge."³⁵ Because they had come to identify eternity with a-temporality, and because they had failed to actualize the eternal in the temporal, many Christians wound up making of temporal and provisional arrangements eternal ones.³⁶ Champions of the absolute, many believers felt bound, in the name of Christianity to resist change and the movements of history. They felt obliged to defend traditional politics against democracy, for example, and to uphold the doctrine of biological fixity against evolutionary theories.³⁷ But their reason for this battle against change, Mounier laments, "was the totally false belief that Christianity was synonomous with fixity and a-temporality."³⁸

Among the first "rebuilders of history," however, there were those whose reaction to absolutism was so intense that they espoused a total relativity which destroyed the very possibility of history. They negated history by denying all continuity and significance in the world.³⁹ The progeny of some of these thinkers are still on the contemporary scene—philosophers who, like the early skeptics, envision a discontinuous universe which lacks coherence, which is nothing more than "a shapeless swarming of events and of relations each of which pursues its course absolutely alone and melts into others only by accident."⁴⁰

The 19th-century philosopher who is usually credited with having rediscovered history is the German philosopher, Georg Hegel. It is ironic, Mounier remarks, that this man, most active in restoring history to the center stage, ended by making a fixity of it himself. Just as Plato and Aristotle erected a system of notions which eventually were absolutized, so did Hegel. In

fact, "the permanent divinization of the system of ideas takes its definitive form from Hegel. . . . He came to make a system even of history."⁴¹ His very attempt to give the primacy to history led to its petrification.

Mounier dismisses Hegel and the historical relativists as pseudo-restorers of history, but he is more favorably disposed to Marx as a thinker who has been able to reinstate history as a value. To the dismay of some of his fellow Christians, Mounier finds Marx's dialectical materialism more compatible with the Christian view of history than the theism of Hegel. Without exonerating Marx of what he considers to be severe shortcomings, Mounier does excuse his materialism as a necessary reaction to the idealism and spiritual evasionism rampant in his time.⁴² Too many idealists had, in the name of Christianity, become escapists, waiting for an eternal afterlife to unite them to God and forgetting that redemption is the fruit of historical action. It was, in fact, the tendency of Christians to evade any responsibility for temporal reality that gave substance to Marx's charge that religion was the opiate of the people.

In his treatise on Christian history Mounier outlines the areas of agreement between the Christian and the Marxist views of history. The resemblances are striking. Both believe that history has a meaning and that the meaning concerns humanity as a whole. Both believe that humanity is destined for a better state in which human freedom will be enhanced. Both believe that man must be creatively involved in his own progressive liberation.⁴³ Marx's prospective view was, however, more akin to the Jewish one than to the Christian view in this: that the end which both envisioned had more to do with the harmonious social and economic and political organization of man than with his ontological transformation.⁴⁴ The most radical difference between Christianity and Marxism, and Mounier insists that this difference is crucial, is that for Marx, history is purely immanent, while for the Christian it is the "immanence of a transcendence."⁴⁵

Human Nature and Original Sin

The difference between the Greek and the Judeo-Christian view of history was closely related to differences in their conceptualizations of nature, particularly of human nature. It will be helpful to examine these differences now to see how they affected the understanding of history.

The Greeks, enchanted by the consistency, order, and harmony in the universe, named the world a *cosmos*, or beauty. They attributed the order and the harmony of all things to nature, an eternal principle which Aristotle would later identify as the formal and the final cause of things.⁴⁶ Aristotle envisioned nature as a dynamic source of unity ordering all things, determining what each should be and hence what it should do. The nature of a thing was its intrinsic perfection, providing it with purpose, limits, and identity. Nature was a principle of unity in several ways. It made individual things to be of one kind, and it made all kinds of things to be ultimately one in an harmonious diversity.⁴⁷ Nature organized the movements of life and of the cosmos, making them predictable, hence rational. History, on the other hand, was a maverick element within being. The fruit of chance, history was merely the residue of nature and was responsible for the untidiness and disorder that blemished the perfection of the cosmos. As nature was predictable and rational, history was unpredictable and irrational.⁴⁸

If the Greek tradition linked history with a disruption of the order provided by nature, so did the Christian tradition, but in quite a different fashion. The Christian did not imagine history to be a residue of nature; history was not itself a chaos, but was a principle of order which differed from the order established by nature. While the Greeks found the whole rationale for man within his nature and nature as a whole, the Christian never expected to find man's entire *raison d'être* in his nature. The Aristotelian concept of a human nature that was a "closed immobile unity containing from the very beginning all present and future characteristics of man" had always been rejected within Christianity.⁴⁹ Mounier points to St. Paul, to St. Augustine, and to many of the other Church Fathers, and he docu-

ments their insistence that man receives his identity not through the order of nature or of law, but mainly through a supernatural order.⁵⁰ Even Aquinas, whose view of nature and of man was more akin to Aristotle's than were the views of most other Christian thinkers, parted with his Greek mentor on this point. Aquinas saw human nature as unique among natures in its openness to an end that was outside itself—an end transcendent and supernatural.⁵¹ Man could attain his full identity and meaning only through the reception of gifts that were added to those of nature, that is, through gifts or grace given in history.

How, then, does the Christian link history with the evils and disorder he confronts? According to the Christian tradition, the fall of Adam set the world awry and brought about disorder and evil. It was also with the fall of Adam that universal history began:

We know this universal history; it begins with the fall of Adam, is renewed by the covenant with Abraham, and is the history of the long preparation for the Messianic Kingdom.⁵²

Mounier's formulation of the Christian view of history and of its relationship to nature depends in great part on his understanding of redemption and that in turn depends on his interpretation of the fall.

Mounier explains the Genesis account of creation and man's fall in this way. Adam, the first man, was not simply an individual, but was, as his name signifies, Mankind, a collective person. Resorting once again to Augustine, Mounier cites the "delightful metaphor that Adam (and we know that in Genesis the word has a collective meaning) fell by sin and as it were, broke himself, filling the world with his fragments."⁵³ This explanation of the fall makes sin to be first and foremost the disintegration of humanity and not simply the loss of an individual's integrity.

Sin is not chiefly a degradation of the individual, it is primarily a breach of human unity by separating it from God. One might almost say (with P. de Lubac) that it is, in the depreciatory sense of the word, an individualization.⁵⁴

How the term individualization can be used pejoratively will be clarified in a later chapter. Meanwhile, it is important to notice in the above text that Mounier attributes the separation of man from man to his prior alienation from God. This is in accord with the Christian view that man's nature is not the ultimate source of human unity nor the sole source of man's identity. A breach between man and God would not entail man's estrangement from man if human nature were entirely determined and self-contained. As it is, however, the unity of humanity comes from outside human nature; it is supernatural. Hence, a disruption of man's relationship with God involves a disruption likewise of man's relationships with man.

With the onset of history, i.e., with the appearance of man as a free and decisive agent, a new order begins to emerge and to infringe upon the order of nature. Since individual histories are caught up in a universal History, two bases for cosmic and for human unity will now exist—nature on the one hand and history on the other. In man, who is a part of nature, but not a wholly determinate part, the two orders mesh. Man's historical activity affects and transforms all of nature, including human nature.⁵⁵ On the other hand, nature provides the limits and possibilities for historical action. No longer totally inviolable, the order of nature can be changed, but since a new order involves the destruction of the old one, disorder appears. Insofar as history generates a new order, it can be held accountable for disturbance and disorder, though history is not itself chaotic.⁵⁶ Sin enjoys some sort of "radical continuity in human nature," but it is not nature itself nor does it arise out of any necessity of nature.⁵⁷

The vocabulary which Mounier employs to describe the fall and the consequent movement of history abounds with variations of terms that connote unity or lack of it. If nature and history are understood to be sources of unity, sin is a principle of division. Mounier speaks of the fall as having introduced "lesions" into human nature. He calls sin a "breach" in human unity and a "separation" from God.⁵⁸ He refers to history as "welding" mankind to God through Christ. Human history is "grafted" into the divine life.⁵⁹ As sin is a principle of division,

redemption is the accomplishment of reconciliation. A progressive realization of the Messianic Kingdom, history is basically a movement of unification. Christ is Savior in that he is "first of all the Gatherer of a dispersed humanity. . . . Christianity is indeed a religion of salvation, but a collective and even cosmic salvation. God's glory is the final reconstituted unity."⁶⁰

It should be pointed out, and perhaps this is an appropriate place to do so, that Mounier does not use the term human nature univocally. At times he speaks of it as the basic unity of man, as a principle of order which is eternal and which makes it possible to distinguish what is human from what is inhuman.

We believe that there are certain permanent vocations in human nature. We feel far too modest to assign boundaries to them. It will take an infinite number of attempts, of errors, of adventures, to know the limits of the human and the inhuman. . . . Overweening presumption will judge everything to be nature or will refuse to hold that anything is nature.⁶¹

From this perspective, that is, viewing nature as eternal, Mounier sees history as man's movement from a natural to a supernatural unity. "There is a natural unity of the human race which is reinforced by its vocation of mystic unity in the Body of Christ."⁶² More often than not, however, Mounier speaks of human nature itself as an "artifex" or the product of man's own creative activity.

The human absolute is the totality of the history of man. . . . No human observer, located as he is in history, uncertain of the past and ignorant of the future, will ever be able to frame an adequate definition of the nature of man.⁶³

In this case human nature seems not to be the eternal principle determining the difference between the human and the inhuman, but the temporal product of man's freedom and creativity.

Mounier asserts that the nature of man cannot be *known* before history has been completed because it does not yet exist in its definitive form. "The nature of man is artifice."⁶⁴ This is not to say that every individual man can simply become whatever he wishes to make of himself, regardless of circumstances. In such a view "there could be no humanity, no history, and

no community."⁶⁵ Rather, individual men, interacting with nature and with other men, become the demiurge of human nature, of a human community, and of human history.

In spite of Mounier's insistence that there is a permanence to man's nature, he finds it difficult to discover its eternal element. In one of his later works he suggests that man's permanence resides precisely in his freedom and his creativity.

Man's permanence is in adventure. The nature of man is artifice. To undertake this adventure, to direct this artifice so that man, in each of his always unexpected appearances, shall be more truly man, such seems to be the task to which both tradition and revolution incite us in perpetual dialogue.⁶⁶

In this statement Mounier neatly brings together his divergent accounts of nature. He does not entirely resolve the difficulty, however, since one cannot claim nature as a norm distinguishing the human from the inhuman if its determinations are not somehow prior to that for which it is the norm.

In one of his analyses of human nature, Mounier does propose that nature constitutes a sort of "determinable order . . . unachieved and open."⁶⁷ It provides limits and order in the way that potentialities set limits and determine what shall or shall not be. Nature would, in that case, not decide which of the potentialities *ought* to be realized, but would provide the basis for whatever actualization does occur. As prior potencies are realized, new potentialities emerge and the hope of novelty is perpetuated.

Since Mounier sees nature as the stuff to be recreated and thus redeemed, he protests as unchristian the attitude of those who consider nature sacrosanct. To insist that man will find happiness only by living in accord with the laws of nature is to live by the message of Aristotle, not by the message of Jesus. An undue reverence for nature viewed in this way siphons off the meaning and value of time.⁶⁸

History and Evolution

Is it possible to speak of a universal history prior to the

history of man? Can one speak of a history of the world or of nature? Mounier himself raises this question, and he answers it in two different ways. In his essay on "Christian History," he responds negatively:

Can we speak of a history of worlds? of a natural history? How can we do it if there is no consciousness to read it? From the beginning, we have rejected the problem of a universal consciousness anterior to the birth of human consciousness or even of conceiving the idea, properly unthinkable, of an existence, which discloses itself in a significant way in the absence of all consciousness.⁶⁹

Here Mounier denies that universal history could exist prior to human consciousness in much the same way that Berkeley denies that sound could exist apart from a hearer. Since history is a manifestation of meaning or of a universal design only if an intelligent being is present to apprehend or recognize it, history could not have existed prior to the emergence of human consciousness.

On the other hand, if history is taken to mean the ensemble of all happenings which are capable of conveying meaning, whether they have actually been observed or not, then Mounier will admit that the totality of events makes up universal history.

We speak of History with a capital H, of History in itself, but empirically the history that we call into question is always history ridiculously partial and deformed.⁷⁰

It is possible to acknowledge a universal History, then, and to admit that "behind human history lies another vaster history, that of the universe."⁷¹

Mounier makes an important and unusual distinction between biological evolution and history. He sees history as one of two poles in the dialectical advance of being, through time, and biological evolution as the other pole. Evolution tends to the creation of the person as autonomous—as an individual:

The one [evolution] tends to the formation of autonomous persons endowed with a faculty of choice, clothed in all the

no community."⁶⁵ Rather, individual men, interacting with nature and with other men, become the demiurge of human nature, of a human community, and of human history.

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Man's permanence is in adventure. The nature of man is artifice. To undertake this adventure, to direct this artifice so that man, in each of his always unexpected appearances, shall be more truly man, such seems to be the task to which both tradition and revolution incite us in perpetual dialogue.⁶⁶

In this statement Mounier neatly brings together his divergent accounts of nature. He does not entirely resolve the difficulty, however, since one cannot claim nature as a norm distinguishing the human from the inhuman if its determinations are not somehow prior to that for which it is the norm.

In one of his analyses of human nature, Mounier does propose that nature constitutes a sort of "determinable order . . . unachieved and open."⁶⁷ It provides limits and order in the way that potentialities set limits and determine what shall or shall not be. Nature would, in that case, not decide which of the potentialities *ought* to be realized, but would provide the basis for whatever actualization does occur. As prior potencies are realized, new potentialities emerge and the hope of novelty is perpetuated.

Since Mounier sees nature as the stuff to be recreated and thus redeemed, he protests as unchristian the attitude of those who consider nature sacrosanct. To insist that man will find happiness only by living in accord with the laws of nature is to live by the message of Aristotle, not by the message of Jesus. An undue reverence for nature viewed in this way siphons off the meaning and value of time.⁶⁸

History and Evolution

Is it possible to speak of a universal history prior to the

history of man? Can one speak of a history of the world or of nature? Mounier himself raises this question, and he answers it in two different ways. In his essay on "Christian History," he responds negatively:

Can we speak of a history of worlds? of a natural history? How can we do it if there is no consciousness to read it? From the beginning, we have rejected the problem of a universal consciousness anterior to the birth of human consciousness or even of conceiving the idea, properly unthinkable, of an existence, which discloses itself in a significant way in the absence of all consciousness.⁶⁹

Here Mounier denies that universal history could exist prior to human consciousness in much the same way that Berkeley denies that sound could exist apart from a hearer. Since history is a manifestation of meaning or of a universal design only if an intelligent being is present to apprehend or recognize it, history could not have existed prior to the emergence of human consciousness.

On the other hand, if history is taken to mean the ensemble of all happenings which are capable of conveying meaning, whether they have actually been observed or not, then Mounier will admit that the totality of events makes up universal history.

We speak of History with a capital H, of History in itself, but empirically the history that we call into question is always history ridiculously partial and deformed.⁷⁰

It is possible to acknowledge a universal History, then, and to admit that "behind human history lies another vaster history, that of the universe."⁷¹

Mounier makes an important and unusual distinction between biological evolution and history. He sees history as one of two poles in the dialectical advance of being, through time, and biological evolution as the other pole. Evolution tends to the creation of the person as autonomous—as an individual:

The one [evolution] tends to the formation of autonomous persons endowed with a faculty of choice, clothed in all the

"dignity of causality." Personal life is the fine flower of life, but it already transcends life and surpasses all the more or less impersonalized *drives*, all the forms of slumbering vitality which menace its permanence.⁷²

History, on the other hand, is an expansive impulse which propels the person to externalize himself, and to respond to persons and to the world which calls him to organize and unify it:

The other [history] tends to the progressive universalization of human groups into vaster and vaster communities which prepare the way for the final total community of man. It tends at the same time towards the progressive expansion of the person in a world brought more and more under control, preparing the way for the final universal organization of things.⁷³

Thus, human progress is continuous with the development of life.

Mounier finds it difficult to accept the hostility and antagonism of many Christians to the view that "man and the world are aligned in the same great crescendo of adventure which has its roots in the dim past."⁷⁴ He commends Père Teilhard de Chardin for having revived the cosmic perspective of Christianity which had remained for so long dormant under the aegis of classical philosophy. He does admit, however, that not every interpretation of evolution enhances the dignity and the freedom of man. If history is suppressed as the other pole of dialectical advance, one is faced with a constricting kind of evolution which precludes human freedom. Cosmic processes are reduced to mechanics or to chance, and the possibility of free personal activity is denied.⁷⁵

It is the great illusion of those who propound evolutionistic theories which deny finality, that they have adequately explained man simply by situating him in relation to the entire system of organisms that have developed through evolutionary processes. Though these men place man at the peak of the evolutionary process, they do not satisfactorily explain him thereby.⁷⁶ Man is not so much defined by that from which he has emerged as by that to which he is attracted. Man is "set on an open track" and he is drawn to communion with the absolute as well as

with this world.⁷⁷ Hence, he is defined by a finality that the evolutionist cannot provide. Whether the concept of history as a counter-impulse to the impetus of evolution itself escapes the traits of mechanism pure and simple remains to be discussed.

History and Progress

From what has been presented so far, it should be clear that progress is one of the intensions than Mounier considers to be part of the mature concept of history. The philosophies of progress are likewise reliant on certain presuppositions about history which are, Mounier believes, derived from the Christian view of history. He lists the following presuppositions to the modern concept of progress:

- Firstly, that history has a meaning, in the first instance the history of the world, which leads to the history of man.
- Secondly, that there is a deep continuous impulse driving history from one level to a better, in spite of many vicissitudes on the way and that this drive is a movement towards the liberation of man.
- Thirdly, that the development of science and technics which is characteristic of the modern age in the West and is now spreading over the whole world, is a decisive factor in this liberation.
- Fourthly, In this process of ascension, man has the glorious mission of being the agent of his own liberation.⁷⁸

All these assumptions, Mounier insists, are derived from basic Christian tenets.

Mounier is well aware that not all philosophers of progress would accept the above presuppositions, since there are many process philosophers who speak of a progress which lacks all finality—of an “indefinite progress.” These claim that the universe is constantly progressing while they deny that it has a

purpose or end. However, one can speak of progress only if it is definite and if there is some terminus by which the progress can be measured.

When speaking of indefinite progress, does one mean that progress will never end? But consider again the terms of reference without which the idea of progress has no meaning. Progress towards what, for whom?⁷⁹

Progress can occur and can have meaning only if it has an end. To speak of indefinite progress is to utter a contradiction. Mounier protests.

Along with the logical considerations which Mounier offers to show that the idea of indefinite progress is self-contradictory, and that progress, to be progress, must be definite, he also offers some serious moral considerations.

But an indefinite progress whose fruits will not be tasted by all men means the triumph of death and injustice for countless generations. . . . Men will have sacrificed themselves entirely for a human greatness in which they will have no part. If such were the destiny of humanity, there would be a veritable and massive alienation at work in the very centre of its activities, which would be increased and not assimilated by progress. History would resolve itself into the unending and laborious creation of a final inheriting caste.⁸⁰

This is potent critique! What Mounier is actually denying is not so much the possibility of "indefinite progress" as the possibility that progress can occur without an *eschaton*. Only a progress which is both definite and eschatological can overcome the alienation he describes above. Only a progress which involves the immanence of a transcendence can awaken the expectation of an "assumption of humanity and of all its works into the ultimate Kingdom."⁸¹ Not only can progress not be indefinite; to be genuine, to be a progress that does not betray itself, it must be linked with eschatology. "Progressive and eschatological: all the complexity of the Christian exegesis of history lies in this liaison."⁸²

In spite of his insistence that the past must not be sloughed

off in genuine progress, Mounier also declares that progress is not a "process of regular accumulation." Progress is never automatic or mechanical. An automatic view of progress is simply a "cosmic generalization of bourgeois capitalism with its mystique of savings."⁸³ To be meaningful, progress must be understood as an ontological advance—as an affair of being, not of having.

Progress, for the Christian, is not an accumulation of possession such as goods, power or comfort, but a journey towards perfection of being. If I die it is because this possession requires the dispossession of all having, and death is dispossession. According to Christianity, historical progress is not a process of regular accumulations, as in technical progress, whose principles are much more summary. It is ascesis, and both in humanity and the individual, follows the law of ascesis: sacrifice, resurrection, transfiguration. Its essence consists, and not by accident, of irreversible losses, woundings, retreats, darkness, and crises.⁸⁴

Since the route of progress is not direct; since it follows a winding path that seems at times to betray its overall direction, progress is "a faith to embrace and a risk to run, not just an entry to be made in the books."⁸⁵ One can have genuine convictions and with faith can assume an attitude of optimism in facing history; however, no person "can say without hesitation, whether progress or defeat is the law of history."⁸⁶ Mounier describes his own faith, his own attitude, as one of "tragic optimism."⁸⁷

Summary

Mounier believes there has been a considerable development and maturation in man's understanding of history. What history means to men today is quite different from what it meant to many of the ancients. Originally, history meant little more than inquiry—a quest for truth that would today be called philosophy.⁸⁸ The truth arrived at through inquiry was always truth about the past, hence history came to be considered a

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means of preserving the past and its truth. With Judaism and Christianity, however, a prospective or looking-to-the-future view of history emerged. Truth and meaning could be found in the future as well as in the past. With Judaism the idea of one all-embracing History having meaning and design emerged. The movements of history were distinguished from the movements of nature, but not as the Greeks had distinguished them—the rational movements being those of nature and the irrational, those of history. Rather, history was viewed as an emerging order in which men would find their ultimate meaning. It was only semi-intelligible, because history was primarily the product of free beings whose nature was not wholly given at any point in time.

If nature seemed incapable of providing man with his entire *raison d'être* it was because man's unity came from a source beyond himself. His supernatural integrity had been destroyed by sin. The restoration of human solidarity could be achieved only through a process of redemption. Through the Incarnation of Christ, human history was "grafted into the very heart of the divine life."⁸⁹ The unity of God, the unity of history and the unity of humanity were all welded together.⁹⁰ Recent theories of evolution, and some philosophies of progress now offer support to the Judeo-Christian expectation of a collective progress of humanity. These confirm the Christian faith that History is a movement of synthesis advancing by arduous effort and devious routes towards the unification of Mankind.

3. The Person, Co-Creator of History

Emmanuel Mounier would never have classified himself as a philosopher of history. He claimed to be a Personalist and his whole concern for history resulted from his intense interest in persons and their destinies. For him, the person was the primary reality, "the receptacle and root of all other values."¹ Any value that he attributed to history—and he considers it one of the supreme values—he derives from the value that history has for persons.² But "a sense of the person implies also a sense of existence and a sense of history."³ In fact, history cannot be understood apart from an understanding of the person, nor can the person be understood apart from history. It is the aim of this chapter to promote an understanding of the person, so that whatever sense of history is implicit in its meaning may be explicated.

It has already been pointed out that Mounier considers history, in the proper sense of the term, to have begun only when man appeared within the cosmos.⁴ Though he admits that some manifestation of personal activity can be discerned in the series of events that preceded the emergence of man, he does not consider this to be genuine history. "History can only be the co-creation of free men."⁵ It results from dialogue and free decisions, and these were possible only after the arrival of man. The person has emerged from natural "history" with the capacity for creating a human history that will assimilate and transform the natural "history" out of which it came.⁶

The Person Transcends Nature

Man's mode of existence can be distinguished from that of

all those beings which preceded him. "The personal is the mode of existence proper to man."⁷ Paradoxically, however, the personal mode of existing must be the object of man's constant striving. "Like consciousness, personal life can only gradually disengage itself from the mineral, the plant and the animal that weigh it down."⁸

With the arrival of man, a being has emerged which surpasses nature while remaining part of it. By his body the person belongs to nature, but by his creative presence to the world, to other persons, and to himself, he escapes the determinations of nature and of purely objective being. The person is an indefinable element within the heart of nature—a creative and transforming force, and nature is subject to his actions.

The relation of the person with nature is not, then, a purely exterior one, but a dialectic of exchange, and of ascension. Man presses down upon nature to overcome nature, as the aeroplane rests its weight on the air to free itself from weight. Ever since man's first appearance upon the earth—"to cultivate and tend it" and to give names to all creatures—there has been no absolute nature, but only nature in process of humanization.⁹

Nature cannot be regarded simply as the person's limits then, though it limits him. It is also the springboard of his freedom and the stuff of his creations. It is the potentially personal element of the universe. Because the person's own humanity is also subject to his creativity, human nature is not definitively given or closed, either. Only when history is finished will human nature have achieved its final form.¹⁰

But what evidence is there that the person transcends nature? Mounier suggests two ways of confirming this. (1) One can study scientific and historical data which reveal that life has progressed to a personal level only by conquering and overcoming natural material forces, and can conclude from an objective analysis of this sort that personal reality has emerged as the peak of an evolutionary process which runs counter to the inertia and determinations of nature.¹¹ (2) One can "openly live the experiment of personal life" and discover its transcendence experientially, "hoping to convert to it a number of

others who still live like trees, like animals, or like machines.”¹² Mounier endorses the second approach as more adequate than the first because an objective analysis can only convey imperfectly, knowledge of something which is not primarily objective. Someone may raise the objection that Mounier’s invitation to live the personal life substitutes commitment for knowledge of the facts—that it requires acceptance of presuppositions that can only be the fruit of knowledge, not its forerunner. To make knowledge of personal transcendence dependent on a decision, on a commitment to live as a person and to incorporate in that commitment the presupposition that the person is creative, is simply to give way to a facile fideism, or to an anti-intellectualism more or less naive. Mounier would counter such a protest with a reminder that “activity helps to give intelligence to thought . . . Authentic thinking . . . starts from commitment and ends with commitment.”¹³

Intelligibility of the Person

With the Existentialists, Mounier insists that the person cannot be known as an object or thing. Objects are entirely accessible; they stand outside a knower and confront him. Objects can be inventoried, categorized, and comprehended, but a person cannot. Why not?

The person is a source of liberty and therefore as obscure as the heart of a flame. By refusing to be a system of clear concepts he reveals himself more strongly as a source of creation and the unforeseeable.¹⁴

Because the person has the power to create, i.e., to promote absolute beginnings (in what way we shall see later), he transcends nature, for nature is precisely what is repetitious and not new. And because he transcends nature, the person is indefinable and eludes all verbal and conceptual formulations.

Nevertheless, persons do have some objective reality. Mounier agrees with Marx that “a being who is not objective is not

a being!" but he immediately adds that a being who is nothing but an object falls short of the full achievement of being, which is the personal life.¹⁵ A person can express himself; he can objectify himself in a thousand ways, in art, in language, in products, or in gesture; but he cannot be equated with any or with all of the manifestations of himself. He is never entirely exposed.

The essence of the person, being indefinable, is never exhausted by its expressions, nor subjected to anything by which it is conditioned. Nor is it definable as some internal substratum, as a substance lurking underneath our attitudes, an abstract principle of our overt behavior. That would still be a mode of being objective, the ghost of an object. It is the living activity of self-creation, of communication, and of attachment, that grasps and knows itself in the act, as the movement of becoming personal. To this experience no one can be conditioned nor compelled.¹⁶

Thus, the person exists and surges beyond the order of determinate objects.

In spite of the fact that the person eludes conceptualization, he need not for that reason be consigned to a realm of total ineffability. A person is, after all, a concrete source of experience, a font of life who expresses himself and who, in so doing, fashions patterns of life, language, culture, and society.¹⁷

By evading objective knowledge he [the person] compels me to drop my tourist camera, and if I wish, to communicate, to share an adventurous destiny whose data are obscure, whose routes uncertain and encounters disconcerting.¹⁸

Thus, true knowledge of the person comes not so much through intellectual apprehension as through involvement with him. Knowledge of a person requires that a free being share life with a free being.

Freedom of the Person

If the person cannot be seized as an object and his secrets

extracted by careful analysis or systematic scrutiny, neither can his freedom. In fact, it is his freedom that effectively removes a person from the realm of objects and that makes him a source of history. Although liberty "is not the being of a person, it is the mode and manner in which a person is everything that he is."¹⁹ Much of the confusion which prevails in contemporary discussion about freedom is due to the fact that freedom is considered in isolation from the total structure of the person. Thus Marxists, Existentialists, Christians, and political leaders of various persuasions all claim to be champions of liberty while each identifies it differently.²⁰

Mounier considers any attempt to explain personal freedom in terms of science or in terms of the objective world inadequate and inept. Such an approach leads almost inevitably to the identification of freedom with an emptiness or absence; for example, freedom is the absence of a cause, or it is indeterminism. He disagrees with certain humanists who have exulted over the recent admission of physicists that the casual principle is not universally applicable, and who have been quick to interpret this as an acknowledgement that there is freedom in the universe.²¹ Mounier will not concede that freedom is simply a remainder after all cosmic determinisms have been accounted for. The person is not simply a coefficient in some cosmic equation.²² Furthermore, if freedom were merely an inscrutable element within the universe, there could be no assurance that the mystifying irregularities confronting men today would not at some future time be reduced to casual complexes unrecognized to date.

Even though some of the developments within nature have produced conditions favorable to the exercise of freedom, Mounier insists that nature does not give man his freedom. Within the nonrigid structure of the universe, for example, the "living molecule" does not show itself to be free, but it does reveal a tremendous accumulation of energy which is the "stuff" of possibility and an appropriate preparation for a center of choice.²³ Freedom does not grow out of this natural preparation as the oak out of the acorn, however. It is achieved only through the initiative of the person.

Amongst all the enigmatic forces in which these preparations are involved and embroiled, it is the irreplaceable initiative of the person alone that can discern openings conducive to his freedom, enter and exploit them. It is the person who makes himself free, having first chosen to be so; but nowhere does he find freedom given or instituted, nor does anything in the world assure him of freedom unless he enters courageously into free experience.²⁴

The guarantee of personal freedom comes not from nature, then, but from the person himself.

If it is impossible to reduce personal freedom to total objectivity, it is just as impossible to identify it with absolute subjectivity, or pure spontaneity. This is the account of freedom offered by some contemporary philosophers, particularly Sartre. According to Sartre, the free person invents himself, his motives, his values, and his entire world without any assistance.²⁵ Freedom of this sort is absolute autonomy. While Sartre's account of free existence as the perpetual invention of the self by the self does have a certain heady appeal, it has also some severe limitations. If freedom were the affirmation of absolute novelty, the free person would not have any continuity. Freedom would exclude development, for there would be nothing prior to it. The free person would be unable to respond to any appeal, for this would be destructive of its own total inventiveness. By concentrating on the person as *ursprung*, as a font of originality which gushes forth and breaks away from the solidity of objective being, Sartre succeeds only in creating a void, and "having cleared a space in the world around him, he has nothing with which to fill it except dread."²⁶

With Marcel, Mounier points up the difficulty of distinguishing Sartre's *ursprung* or the font of freedom from the vitally necessary—from the instinctive preference and the will to power. "A freedom that gushes forth as sheer reality, that is so closely involved with the crude assertion of existence that it is presented as a necessity—Sartre calls it a condemnation—is a blind force of nature, a naked power."²⁷ Sartre's astute explanation of the person's ability to transcend himself, to tear himself away from being in order to ex-ist, has overlooked or

deliberately ignored the person's capacity for relaxing, for giving and for receiving, all of which are also constitutive of his personal life and expressions of his freedom.²⁸

The most critical weakness of the Sartrean position is that the free person is reduced to an isolated individuality. By identifying freedom with autonomy, Sartre encourages the person to become constricted, opaque, and incommunicative—to become what Mounier would consider to be a non-person.²⁹ With no possibility of freely giving and receiving, with no sphere of intersubjectivity and no possibility of community, the free man is condemned to a kind of convulsive isolation. Furthermore, since each person is no more than a spontaneous individuality and strictly separated from all other beings, there can be no such thing as *a* History in the singular. There can only be incommunicable histories, and it is questionable that even these are possible.³⁰

In contrast to the Sartrean view that the person is a blind irruption whose freedom depends on nothing beyond itself, Mounier holds that a person's freedom to create or to invent himself comes to him as a vocation.

My liberty is never mere spontaneity; it is always something regulated—better still, it is something called forth. It is the call that gives freedom its spiritual force, and that is why, upon an inadequate analysis, it is apt to be confused with the impulse for freedom. For if the call fades, the free spirit relapses and adapts itself.³¹

It is in response to a summons, then, that a person exposes or transcends himself. "The free man is the man to whom the world puts questions and who responds accordingly; he is the responsible man."³² The freedom of which Mounier speaks is, unlike the liberty of desolation just described, an affair of presence and commitment. It is primarily a tendency to unite and to associate, rather than to be detached.³³

There is a sense in which freedom may be looked on as detachment, but the view is gained only by a sort of hindsight. Just as a driver may experience detachment from his starting point when he glances into the rear-view mirror while moving

towards his destination, so the free person may experience release or detachment from his former condition when he acts freely and creatively. His freedom does not reside primarily in his ability to leave something behind, but in his power to move towards what is attracting him.

One does not free a man by detaching him from the bonds that paralyze him; one frees a man by attaching him to his destiny.³⁴

To be free, then, does not mean to be isolated and unattached, but to be committed, to be *engagé*.

Mounier's view of freedom as attachment to one's destiny may seem naive to anyone familiar with the Sartre's protest that if God exists man cannot be free. Human freedom, he claims, is the right to invent one's self and to create one's own destiny. Man can brook no limitations on his possibilities, and that is precisely what the theist does. By admitting a fixed end to history, he accepts the suppression of his right to create himself. If God exists, then it is he who determines man's purpose and destiny, and it is he who charts the course of history.³⁵ The person's meaning and the meaning of history is imposed from without rather than invented from within. The human adventure is reduced to the mere execution of predetermined functions. Any element of suspense is like the suspense experienced by a movie viewer who can watch a film but can do nothing about its outcome. His only involvement is that of a spectator, for the plot is all worked out and finished on the reel.

To appreciate Mounier's response to this Existentialist critique, it is necessary to explore in greater depth and breadth the structure of the person.

The Person and the Individual

The person is the only reality in the universe which is truly communicable, which is "towards the other, and even in the other towards the world, and in the world before being in it-

self.”³⁶ The best characterization of the person, then, does not emphasize his incommunicability, or his independence, and his privacy, though these are important facets of personal existence, but his ability to respond, to communicate with and to love others.

Mounier makes a dramatic distinction between the individual and the person, a distinction which explains his hostility to individualism as a philosophy. “The person is polarized in a way contrary to individuality; individuality is dispersion; the person is integration.”³⁷ The person is inclined to make itself one with a world that is not itself. Its basic impulse is eccentric.³⁸ The individual, on the other hand, is ego-centric; it is intent only on preserving itself as a discrete biological entity.³⁹ Restricted to this body, in this time and this place, the individual is the “dissolution of the person in matter.”⁴⁰ Matter isolates and cuts off; it establishes barriers. Matter makes a person to be an individual, and in proportion to its individuality, makes it to be opaque and incommunicable.

Even if his disposition is the best, the individual darkens communication by his very presence which produces some degree of opacity, whoever he is. My body itself gives me the most obvious image of opacity, interposing its hindrance in the midst of every confidence.⁴¹

Individuality frustrates communication, and is thus the “sub-rational aspect of the person.”⁴² To the extent that it encumbers appropriate responses, it also limits freedom, since freedom is the power of response. It is true that to be a person requires individuality (hence Mounier’s insistence that freedom is always “under conditions”), and it is true that “the self-reflective movement which constitutes the ‘individual’ contributes to the maintenance of the human shape,” but a man will grow and achieve greater personhood only insofar as he is continually purifying himself from the individual.⁴³ In fact, “it is the constant surpassing of the individual which constitutes the true movement of personalisation.”⁴⁴

It would be very easy to over-emphasize the superiority which Mounier attributes to the person over the individual, so

it should be noted that Mounier insists that individuality is absolutely integral to the personal life. His anti-individualism is not a refusal to recognize the value of the uniqueness and inaccessibility of persons. It does not express a hostility to bodiliness which is the cause of individuality. Rather, it stems from his basic Christian conviction that self-centeredness is destructive of life, while love or other-centeredness is redemptive and saving.

In the brief history of the notion of the person that he provides in the introduction to his *Personalism*, Mounier acknowledges that the great contribution of Christianity to the development and enrichment of the notion of the person is precisely its affirmation of the value of the individual.

Whilst for them [the Greeks], multiplicity was an evil inadmissible to the spirit, Christianity made it into an absolute, by affirming the creation *ex-nihilo*, and the eternal destiny of each and every person. The supreme Being which through love brings them into existence, no longer makes the world a unity through the abstraction of the idea, but by an infinite capacity for the indefinite multiplication of these separate acts of love. Far from being an imperfection, this multiplicity, proceeding from superabundance, bears that superabundance in itself as an illimitable interchange of love.⁴⁵

It should be noticed, however, that Christianity was able to affirm the value of the individual only because it had already affirmed belief in a personal God. Personal in a super-eminent degree, that is, creative, communicative and in the double sense of the world ec-centric. God could promote diversity and individuality by creating, that is, by an infinite generosity in communicating being; and he could promote unity by his intimate presence, fidelity, and love. Such a God is not one who affirms himself by what he can take away from man, as atheists like Bakunin and Feuerbach have charged, but one who exists as granting man a freedom to communicate being analogous to his own.⁴⁶

Person as Presence

The person is an individual intent upon escaping the confines of his body and of his ego-centric life. Not by being attentive to himself, but by generously making himself available to others, the individual becomes a person.⁴⁷ A person is thus a presence—a being with. Mounier likes to use the Latin term *adsum* to show that presence means more than “I am here.” *Adsum* means “I am towards” all that is here; I am given to it.⁴⁸ In fact, a person cannot even be present to himself if he is not first present to the world outside himself.

My life, my action, my thought, all spontaneity in me never creates a presence. I am not present to myself if I do not give myself to the world.⁴⁹

Likewise, the person cannot be present to the world unless it is offered to him. A reciprocity of giving and of receiving makes presence or personal existence an experience of grace.

The word *present*, as it is used above refers generally to one's location in space. It means, “I am here, in this place, with these beings.” But the term *present* can also refer to one's location in time. A person's presence to himself is his *present*. The *now* of his identity as a person—as a Me-here-now—is the act by which he takes possession of his past, and in the present, gives a future to himself; and the *here* of his identity is the act by which he takes possession of his space.⁵⁰ Mounier considers time and space to be different aspects of the same reality, viz., a reality in the process of becoming personal.⁵¹

If time were only outside a person and were made without him, it would be nothing more than an object for him, slowly opening its enfolded secrets. But time is not just an object.

My duration is not a spectacle slowly unfolding itself before me; it would be so only if I were no longer present to myself and to the world.⁵²

A person opens himself to the disclosures of time; he accepts the reality it offers him, but he is also aggressive in making it yield to his transforming action.

It [the present] is an exacting intruder. It requires to be, wishes to be, an activity reinforced by the whole weight of personality. It is the living bridge by which the eternal is incarnated in historical existence, where the act of choice makes us man, and changes a world.⁵³

It is thus that the person creates the future and makes his own history while contributing to history as a whole.

Mounier makes an important observation about the person's presence in his *Révolution Personnaliste et Communautaire*. It is an observation that casts some light on his claim that a person is an incarnate spirit. Presence, he says, is not a result of physical or material proximity, but is an affair of spirit.

Material contact not only fails to unite, it does not even effect a meeting. There is union only at a distance, and the only true distance is spiritual.⁵⁴

Sartre says something similar when he asserts that self-consciousness means presence to oneself, therefore distance from oneself.⁵⁵ But, where Sartre insists that nothingness makes presence possible, Mounier holds that spirit is the source of presence.

But why must presence involve distance? Because one can only be present to something if it is other, that is, if it is not the conscious self. Two material objects might be next to one another in space without being present to each other because neither can assert of the other, "this is not me!" It is only when a being can distinguish itself from what is not itself, that presence can occur. Since matter is not creative of this distinction, there must be spirit to create distance and presence. The ambivalence of spirit is that it is at the same time responsible for distance from being, and for presence to it.

The Person Is an Incarnate Spirit

In several of his treatises, especially in the one on progress, Mounier argues against the proponents of crude materialism for the existence of spirit. He repudiates Marxism for its negation of the spiritual and resorts once again to historical and

scientific data to show that "matter and body are the immediate expression of spiritual activity."⁵⁶ After pointing out that life has continuously progressed towards the creation of personal centers of activity, Mounier states:

It is true that matter in modern physics is characterized by the law of continuous degradation, and it is not easy to see how one can base a law of progress on this single discouraging reality. If one is to be both progressive and materialistic, one can only do so by avoiding a purely scientific concept of matter and by reintroducing into this concept the factor of creativity and irreversibility. We will not quarrel about names, but some call it spirit.⁵⁷

The most severe shortcoming of Marxism as a materialistic and progressive philosophy is its failure to recognize the spiritual as "an autonomous, primary, creative reality."⁵⁸

Marx rejected the primacy of spiritual reality because it seemed to him to be nothing more than an "ideological reflection"—a secondary rather than a primary mode of existence. In other words, he considered spirit to be the kind of a reality that an idea is, an abstract product of man's involvement with his physical environment. He saw spirit as a product of man and of material reality rather than as that which gives rise to matter and which causes physical and personal development.⁵⁹

Included in Marx's denial of spirit was his rejection of all eternal truths and of any values that transcend time or space.⁶⁰ Mounier blames Christians for having given Marx the grounds for his rejection of spiritual values. Christians had allowed the meaning of *spirit* to become so dissipated that it *did* seem to refer to little more than abstractions. Almost without realizing it, Christians had slipped from integral realism to an illusory idealism of the sort that Marx condemned.

We have little by little allowed our notion of the spiritual to be contaminated by the eclectic and rootless notions of an idealism in which *spiritual*, *moral* signifies the spirit without the body, the breath of life without life, good will, without will, culture without earth.⁶¹

Mounier's astute observation is probably so accurate that many

Christians, even now, would find themselves puzzled by the negative context of his description of spirit. What is more, his account of what the spiritual should mean for a Christian is likely to startle many of them and thus confirm his charge that Christians have unwittingly slipped into idealism.

The spiritual, for the Christian, is in all rigor, the presence in our life of eternal life, in opposition to our natural activities. But *this eternal life "is itself carnal"* and is offered to us ordinarily only through these natural activities. (Italics added)⁶²

Mounier's insistence that spirit is embodied, and that the eternal is inserted in the temporal is an expression of his faith in a mystery central to Christianity, the Incarnation. He finds it difficult to understand why Christians who believe that their life and history taken as a whole find their meaning and direction in an Incarnation, should be so disturbed by the alliance of time and eternity, of matter and spirit.⁶³

Mounier has no inclination to try to establish the existence of matter as he has established the existence of spirit. It is obvious to him that matter exists and he simply proclaims its solidity and the impossibility, or better, impracticality of trying to reduce it to an idea.⁶⁴ But, if matter is inertia and passivity, if it is impersonality and the retardation of spirit, as Mounier indicates it is, it is also a sacrament of spirit.⁶⁵ It signifies something more than itself and makes present that something more.

Matter and body are not only prolongations of spiritual activity, a background and extrinsic action from which it could be detached; they are one and together the immediate expression, the visible appearance of spiritual activity.⁶⁶

Hence, a man is not a combination of two unlike realities, matter and spirit. "Man is a body in the same degree he is spirit, wholly body and wholly spirit."⁶⁷

A person is not a spirit inhabiting a body. He is his body and he cannot be identified, or even be, without his body:

I exist subjectively, I exist bodily are one and the same experience. I cannot think without being, and I cannot be without

my body which is my exposition—to myself, to the world, to everyone else.⁶⁸

Because he exists bodily, the person is liberated from the solitude that would be his if he were deprived of all solidity. Without a body he would be reduced to thinking thoughts about thoughts. If he had no body he would not adventure into time and space. "What need would a pure spirit have to displace itself: Would it not be at will either pure subjectivity or instantaneous ubiquity?"⁶⁹

The body refuses to leave a person wholly transparent. It shoves him out of himself and forces him to confront the world and the struggle of men. "By solicitation of the senses it pushes me out into *space*, by growing old it acquaints me with *duration*, and by its death it confronts me with *eternity*."⁷⁰

A person's body exceeds its biological limits. Though the person is a me-here-now because of his body, he is also furnished with a family, with a social heritage, and an economic condition; he exists at a given point in history and in space, and all of this is his body!⁷¹ Furthermore, this complex body was formed in some "mysterious design" long before his own will was shaped.⁷²

Though he has been given a body which he did not choose, the person is not restricted to this body. He is able to transcend it by his personal activity, i.e., by involving himself in the whole universe that is not himself and that is not yet *his* body.⁷³ The person is on the move, constantly displacing himself and relocating himself, constantly struggling to attain a more universal vantage point and contact with the whole of reality.⁷⁴ "The pressure of a destiny and a vocation which is a defiance hurled at all the forces of the world are interlocked in him."⁷⁵

Vocation and Fidelity

A person does not emerge from his situation on the head of a blind spontaneity or vital impulse.⁷⁶ Rather, he is called to transcend himself. It is the call which establishes the person's

freedom and which empowers a response.⁷⁷ The call is always directed to the person as he is in his situation. It is an invocation to this person, now, here, like this, with these men, with this past. It can be answered only through this body, from this background, during this time. It entices a man to shape his own history and in so doing to contribute to the shape of a larger history.

Our immediate destiny is to move forward in history and to create history even within a perspective of eternity where all this human effort will have its ultimate fulfillment beyond the human.⁷⁸

If the call should fade and become inaudible, the power to respond to it is dissipated and the free spirit relapses. The person becomes enmeshed, then, in his situation.

In his *Personalist Manifesto*, Mounier proposes a descriptive definition of the person that it is a "unifying vocation."⁷⁹ To realize one's vocation, then, to act out one's personhood, is to respond positively to reality and to do so knowing that the "yes" entails cleavages and risks. The person who says "no"—who refuses to become engaged may settle for "some deadly simplification of himself and his vocation, which he calls principle, conviction, style of living, and which is only a socially acceptable way of refusing life."⁸⁰ Mounier likens him to some of the lower forms of sea life which protect themselves from danger by avoiding movement and by "withdrawing from further evolutionary adventures under a protective shell."⁸¹

In his work *L'Affrontement chrétien*, Mounier insists that both a principle of continuity and a principle of change are required for the realization of one's vocation. He warns that those who eschew all permanence in the name of freedom lose a dimension of personal life as surely as those who choose to vegetate. Contrasting the universe of the Knight of Life (the universe of Sartre, perhaps) with the Universe of the Knight of Faith (the universe of the Christian) he observes that the former "lives in a universe of momentary passion, of frantic vitality, self-squandering in the intoxicating morrowless plentitude of a short and violent impetus; or else of a finite and positive design."⁸² This is a world in which persons refuse

fidelity in order to renounce nothing. On the other hand, the universe of the Knight of Faith is one "of the eternal incarnated, a universe which surrenders itself wholly in no one instant of time, but only in each instant through all the others."⁸³ In this world the eternal permeates the temporal. Because of this, fidelity is possible; personal identity is possible; progress is possible; and, so is history.

Mounier sees fidelity as a "synthesis of renunciation and of continuity."⁸⁴ It is not constancy or the permanence of immobility, but it is the continuation of personal creativeness.

Fidelity, or at least the only form that deserves the name, is the extension given to a creative impulse, always present, always tending towards an immediate promise and void as far as possible, of a dead past; an extension given by an increasingly comprehensive duration, tinged with a flavor of eternity. It is the fullness of contentment and the fervour of hope, always the same, always different. It is both homage to reality and a preference for a durable existence over the pursuit of chimaeras.⁸⁵

Fidelity, then, is the person's perpetual and positive response to the opportunities that beckon. It is continual creativeness.

Transcendence through Engagement

There are three kinds of being which call out to persons and which entice them into historical involvements. "The creative person is wholly self-extended towards the *world*, towards the *other*, towards the *absolute*."⁸⁶ The person goes out to these three kinds of being in different ways. Before considering the three modes of personal transcendence, it may be well, however, to clarify the meaning of the term and to discuss the necessary conditions for transcendence.

We usually think of that which is transcendent as something beyond us, as something which is at a distance. But transcendence does not necessarily involve a spatial distance. We have already seen that true distance is spiritual and creative of presence.

In thinking of the transcendent, we have to beware of spatial

images. A reality that transcends another is not one that is separated from and floating above it, but a reality that is superior in the quality of its being. . . . The relation of transcendence does not exclude the transcendent reality from being present in the heart of him whom it transcends: As St. Augustine said, "God is closer to me than my own thoughts."⁸⁷

Transcendence need not involve physical distance, then, but it always involves qualitative distance. There is a gap between the smile which bespeaks love and the smile that is a lie. Intercourse that is an act of love transcends intercourse that is mere copulation. The world is full of persons who appear to be performing the same actions, using the same gestures or words, but who are in reality doing very different things. This qualitative gap makes us recognize transcendence.⁸⁸

Mounier often reiterates Nietzsche's proclamation that man is meant to surpass himself. His sense of historical insertion must be "immediately associated with a sense of creative emergence."⁸⁹ Self-transcendence means tearing oneself away from being as it is presently, and transmuting it in order to personalize it still further.

One of the requisites for transcendence in all its modes is decisiveness and the exercise of choice. Making decisions which will affect, and to some extent effect the future is both necessary and risky. It is risky because there is no deductive principle by which the consequences of one's choices and decisions can be mapped out entirely in advance. It is necessary because not to decide is itself a decision by default and one must live with its consequences too.

The person cannot engage in endless cogitations in the hope that all the consequences of a choice will become crystal clear. Such hesitancy leads to the stultification of creativity and to conformity rather than to progress. It is only by creative decisions that human transcendence is possible—by decisions which disrupt all calculations, "breaking a chain of probabilities or breaking an intimidating play of forces."⁹⁰ Are such decisions really possible? One who envisions reality as the Greeks did, would probably have to answer, "no." But the Christian has reason to respond positively.

Henceforth, how will it be possible to express by means of pure deduction the being that originates by free choice, by an act of love . . . ? How uphold any more the supremacy of the timeless idea, of necessary unrolling in a world sown with essential moments; a Creation, a Fall, an Incarnation; in a world whose explanation will henceforth pivot upon a history of personages. Man is delivered from a cosmic destiny. It is because there has been such a thing as an absolute beginning, founded upon an act of love, that those commencements like the birth of a soul or a free act will from now on appear possible.⁹¹

Free decisions are continually creating new realities and are the source of an ever changing order of intelligibility.⁹²

Mounier excoriates those who refuse to make choices, for they destroy the possibility of transcendence. To engage in action is to be *de-cisive*, i.e., to be cutting away. Choice is a two-edged sword; its *yes* always involves a *no*. To refuse choice on the assumption that thereby one need renounce nothing is childish, for choice always involves an element of sacrifice. But sacrifice is not primarily a negative act. Rather it is an act of devotion and of adherence. To sacrifice is to offer oneself to another, to commit oneself to him, to be *engagée*.⁹³ This activity is at the same time self-giving and self-realizing.

When I choose this and not that, I am indirectly choosing myself, edifying (building up) myself by the decision. By having dared, by having exposed myself, by having taken the risk in obscurity and uncertainty, I have found something more of myself which I was not actually looking for.⁹⁴

Choice, then, is the necessary condition for the progress of personalization.

It must be made clear that even though the act of choice is an extremely important condition for the transcendence of the person and the exercise of freedom, it is nevertheless not to be identified with freedom. Freedom can never be worthless, but choice is worthless and in no way affects transcendence when the alternatives offered to it have no value. The ability to choose between cholera and small pox does not bear witness

to man's freedom. Freedom is found only in a qualitative transformation—only in a progressive liberation to choose the good.⁹⁵

Another condition necessary for transcendence is the person's acceptance of his human condition.⁹⁶ Many people refrain from action and from making decisions for fear that they might be sullied by the imperfections of their activity and of its consequences. Too much concern for integrity can be a form of ego-centrism and individualism. A morbid concern for purity of conscience stifles liberty and results in a narcissistic attitude which precludes the possibility of transcendence.

Every situation is impure, mixed, ambiguous, and therefore heart-rending. To wish to act while not abandoning one tittle of one's principles, or soiling one's hands is a contradiction. It is the expression of a pharisaical ego-centricity more attached to one's own image than to the common destiny of man.⁹⁷

The task of the person in history is to enter into the impure, to dissolve the impurities and to renew reality by bringing it to perfection.⁹⁸

The most basic mode of transcendence and the one which paves the way for higher modes is production. By modifying the world around him and making it more and more an objectification of himself, the person extends his physical and, through it, his personal being. He gives himself a new and more extensive body and he gives something of his own humanity to impersonal reality.⁹⁹ The transformation of matter implies not only its personalization, but also provides new opportunities for the emergence of the human spirit. As the condition of matter is transformed so are the conditions for the expression and emergence of the human spirit heightened.¹⁰⁰

As we have seen, Mounier will have none of the sentimental nostalgia which leads some persons to prefer a reversion to nature as they once knew it to the promotion of a more humanized one. He admits that humanity has not yet integrated the experience of the technological revolution, but he insists, even against those with whom he otherwise feels a great affinity, that given time the integration will occur. One of the conditions

for this assimilation is the recognition that an artificial environment is more human than a natural one.¹⁰¹

The second level of transcendence is that which is achieved through interpersonal relations. The person is called to surpass himself by sharing himself with another person. The basic paradox of the Gospel is here affirmed. One finds himself only by losing himself—by giving himself away in response to the appeal of another person or persons. Once again the call of another appears as the creative principle of transcendence and the power of freedom. Through it the person can be “assimilated to the humanity of all men.”¹⁰²

By being drawn to a new center outside of himself, the person experiences dispossession and at the same time freedom. As a power of “infinite expansion” he is able to decentralize himself—to move eccentrically to overcome his narcissism and to love.¹⁰³ This turning away from self, this *metanoia* or conversion, is not simply a ploy for finding himself in another. Only by becoming involved with a person as *other* can he transcend himself. Genuine love creates distinctions and differences; it does not suppress them.¹⁰⁴ It is the giving and the receiving of a unique presence; it is the communication of one’s very being. Because it is even more fundamental than the person’s ability to think, Mounier speaks of a new *cogito* to replace the old one: “Love is the surest certainty that man knows, the one irrefutable, existential *cogito*: I love; therefore I am.”¹⁰⁵

The person’s transcendence through love discloses that there is implicit in every self an *other* apart from which the self has no existence.

One might almost say that I have no existence, save insofar as I exist for others, and that *to be* is in the final analysis *to love*.¹⁰⁶

When love and communication lapse, the person is reduced to his individuality. He is isolated, and in this isolation the *I* is alienated not only from the *Thou*, but from the self as well.

Love has an inescapable trinitarian character. Not only are the *I* and *Thou* enriched and transformed through personal

communion, but the concentration of the *I* and *Thou* creates also a *We* which had no prior reality.¹⁰⁷

It is a miraculous affair, the communion of two persons! It is only there, in the discovery of a *Thou* by an *I*, and in the formation of a personal *We* surpassing these bounds, that we find the most authentic human social bond. . . . Two beings who love each other in this depth succeed in forming a new and genuine Person through their two persons.¹⁰⁸

The existence of the *We* bears witness to the mutual love of persons. It is a testimony of their freedom and as such reveals the third and ultimate mode of transcendence, viz., a movement towards the Absolute.

A community of persons finds its cohesion within a *We* which is itself a Person. The *We* emerges from the community in much the same fashion as the *I* emerges from its material conditions, i.e., in response to a call. The *We* does not exist apart from the community of persons any more than the human person exists apart from his body. This does not mean that the body is the cause of the person, nor that the community is the cause of the *We*; both are simply the conditions for the manifestation of the person. As the human person is his body, though he transcends it, so the Absolute is the community of persons, though he transcends this community. The Christian acknowledges that this community is the Body of Christ; the person identified with yet transcending this body is divine. As the human person brings his body to perfection by extending it, so the person who is Christ and who is divine extends his Body and brings it to perfection through the progressive development of the human community.¹⁰⁹

There is, of course, an important difference between the human person and the one who is divine. The divine person is totally and absolutely creative. It is he who appeals to persons and whose appeal bestows the power of freedom. His invocation permeates every level of reality and every other call to freedom. It creates the New Man, "the Body of Christ which is, at it were, the glorious body of a redeemed humanity."¹¹⁰

It is now time to return to the protest of those who believe

that if God *is*, then some of man's possibilities are necessarily suppressed. If persons are persons only insofar as they are communicative and generous, only insofar as they are free and are freeing of others, and if God is himself absolutely personal, then the apprehension of the atheist must be unfounded.

Truly all is not possible in a universe the destiny of which is known. But when this destiny is linked with a fourth dimension of infinite liberality, one may well believe that its realization within the dimensions of existence is equally infinite in possibilities, within the context of its dual conditioning by the supernatural and the empirical. . . . Christ's transcendence would indeed be a rigid and avaricious transcendence if after him history had substantially nothing more to say. . . . When He sketches in the field of history, He does not delimit. He liberates. He does not arrest growth, He promotes it.¹¹¹

For the man of faith, then, history is not absurd, nor is his own destiny constricting. Rather, it is a call to reach through human efforts in history for an ultimate fulfillment which is beyond history.¹¹²

Summary

Mounier's concern for history is rooted in his concern for persons and their destinies. If the person's history and his destiny are predetermined, history can be nothing more than a prolonged manifestation of mechanical processes, or the relentless realization of a plan conceived by some Supreme Being and hesitantly spewed out in a duration indifferent to the presence of man. If each man's destiny is, on the other hand, entirely his own creation, there can be no single history, but only the unremitting action of a multiplicity of individuals unaffected by each other.

Persons are neither parts of a cosmic mechanism, nor monads moving about with or without a preestablished harmony. They are free beings, beings which are capable of a response. Each person has a vocation which is existentially

unique, but ultimately the same. Each is called out of a unique situation to a confrontation with what is other. If there were no call, there could be no response, hence no freedom. As a power of response, the person's freedom is an inclination to association or a unifying force. It is not a talent for intellectual fabrication, but for union at the concrete existential level. Hence, persons make themselves present and available to the world, to other persons, and to the Supreme Person. They communicate their very being to one another. Called to transcend themselves as individuals and to share themselves with others, they become creatively engaged in production, in interpersonal relations, and in building up the Body of Christ. They surpass themselves through a knowing which is a loving—through a knowing which is fecund and which generates new being. Communicative, generous, and creative, the person promotes newness, absolute beginnings, hence progress or history. Because the person is an incarnate spirit, there is an element of the eternal in his time. Thus "history is not a relativity born and dying afresh at each instant, but the faithful, perpetually renewed image of the absolute, which shines from above on Heraclitus' river and blends its radiance with those transient waters."¹¹³

Because the person is neither entirely objective, nor entirely subjective, his duration does not unroll before him independent of his presence, nor of his intentions.

If historical progress is possible because of freedom, it can also be retarded by refusals to respond, to communicate and to create. Thus, history's progress does not follow a line of unremitting, undisturbed advance. "Progress is never entirely definable, certainly not outside the paradox of the crucifixion."¹¹⁴ That the movement is in the main a forward one is something the Personalist trusts. But no one can accurately foretell its ways, its halts, and its tangents. Mounier does not even rule out the possibility of total destruction, but he has confidence that even this could be overcome by the promise of resurrection. For a God who is infinite liberality and eminently personal can provide history with an infinity of possibilities for progress.

4. History: A Community of Destinies

It has been pointed out several times now that Mounier seems to contradict himself when discussing history and the destiny of man. While he speaks of history as the common destiny of man and insists that there is ultimately one History which has a single direction and significance, he also insists that, as the co-creation of free men, history can have no prior significance which merely unfolds in time.¹ He puts the dilemma this way.

Whoever advocates individual history is automatically favoring the introduction of a form of freedom. Whoever advocates the history of the world is automatically confronting the individual with a definite necessity.²

In the preceding chapter Mounier was seen as advocating personal histories; in this chapter he will be observed as an advocate of universal History.

One of the preconditions for a universal History is that there be some sort of actual or virtual unity among men. Mounier insists that there is a world of persons, and that because there is—because humanity is one—a single, all embracing History is possible.³ The Christian belief that there is such a History coincides with one of the basic tenets of Marxism.

We can note some points of convergence, or at least the appearance of such, between the Marxist conception and the Christian conception of history. For the one and for the other, there is a meaningful history; for the one and for the other, this meaning is not only a significance given to the individual destinies, but a significance of the human adventure taken as a whole.⁴

To assert that there is a universal History, then, is to affirm that the totality of events is not a pure chaos. The ensemble of all that has ever happened and that ever will happen is not simply an aggregate, it is a significant whole.

Mounier's assertion that there is universal History raises a number of questions. Is the History that he affirms the expression of some Absolute Spirit manifesting itself in total independence of human histories? Is universal History the expression of a providential design which must be realized regardless of the histories of individual men? Is it a History that overrides and is foreign to the histories of individual persons?⁵

We have seen in chapter three that God is infinite liberality—that he does not contradict man's freedom, but he promotes it.⁶ Hence, the above questions can all be answered in the negative.

Let us look at the possibility of a universal History from another perspective, then, and ask: Can the combination of all individual histories be the basis for a single unified History? If so, then how? For a History that results from mathematical necessity—that is the result of adding discrete histories together—lacks the requisites for being history. It is automatic and impersonal and precisely what History is *not*!

Robert Capon, an Episcopalian priest who has written a delightful theology of history in every man's language, suggests that a universal History that is a combination of all personal histories is possible! Persons *do*, in fact, continually strive to combine their histories, and in spite of overwhelming difficulties, they often enough succeed.

The job of taking two independent persons, two historic animals—two histories—and bringing them together in love or friendship, in marriage or business, has always been ticklish. . . . But for two people to undertake a joint meaning! To attempt to make room in my history for your history without slighting either or wrecking both! Why it's a wonder we even dare ask anyone the time of day, let alone think of inviting his friendship, his devotion, his love. That we so commonly do, of course, is the most convincing of all proofs of the existence of the city—

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of history. That anything with such odds against it should be attempted with such unabashed regularity can only mean that we were built for nothing else. It is as if every man in the world chose to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel. It proves something about human nature. . . . When a man goes through the world with his eyes open for friendships, for alliances, for love—when he is so continually on the make, morally or immorally, inviting whole histories into his history—it can only mean that history is his native air.⁷

Nowhere is Mounier as earthy and as practical as Father Capon in relating histories to History. But the two agree that, in spite of all kinds of barriers and difficulties, histories can be combined in a personal rather than in a mathematical way. In fact, it is the whole thrust of personal life to do this.

Persons are more than individuals and the decisions of one can actually create (or destroy) the life and being of another. "If persons were no more than spontaneous individualities, and strictly separate, they would not have a History in the singular. There would only be so many incommunicable histories."⁸ By their decisions persons are continually communicating what they *are* and realizing what they can *become*.

If there is one affirmation that is common to all Personalist philosophies to which we are related, whether the Christian philosophies of Kierkegaard, Scheler, Gabriel Marcel or Berdiaeff, or the agnostic thought of Jaspers, it is that the basic impulse in a world of persons is not the isolated perception of self (*cogito*) nor the egocentric concern for self, but the communication of consciousness (the "reciprocity of consciousness" as Maurice Nédoncelle called it in a recent thesis); we should prefer to call it the communication of existence, existence with the other, perhaps we should say co-existence (*Mitsein*).⁹

Hence, there is a continual mingling of freedoms and a continual struggle among persons to harmonize their creations. This is the arena of History in which the "natural unity of the human race is reinforced by its vocation to a mystic unity in the Body of Christ."¹⁰ So, in spite of the astonishing improbability of a universal History resulting from the convergence of

personal histories—one might almost say from a merging of personal histories—it is Mounier's faith as a Christian and his conviction as a Personalist that this fantastic dream is a realizable one!

In his *Personalist Manifesto* Mounier defines the person as a vocation—as a “unifying vocation.”¹¹ Remember that it is the vocation of a person which gives him his identity—which integrates the diverse aspects of his life, which entices him into communion with others. When he speaks of the vocation of the human race, then, is Mounier intimating that Humanity is also a person? Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that, at least in this instance, he is presupposing that this is so.

Mounier is quite explicit in asserting that Mankind is a collective person, and like all persons, a being that is in the making. Just as he describes the “We” that emerges from the communion of two persons as a third person, so he considers humanity, or the entire community of persons to be a person in more than a merely metaphorical way. “The relationship of the person to community is so organic that one can say of true communities that they are really, and not figuratively, collective persons—persons of persons.”¹²

That Humanity or Mankind should be understood as a collective person is not, of course, a notion original to Mounier. He continually points out that this is a profoundly Christian insight.

Now the idea of Humanity with a capital H, which many, after the fashion of the Stoics are inclined to consider an abstraction, has been finally consecrated by Christianity. The idea of the New Man, which pervades Pauline theology, is always presented under a collective aspect. The way to God, we read in Cyril of Alexandria, can only be found when all men are gathered into one collective man, with Christ as his head. Again, Augustine says the life of the human race, from Adam to the end of time, is like that of a single man. For God educates it like an individual, raising it nearer to eternity in each successive age and period.¹³

As the individual person is an infinite power of expansion—a

being which can continually develop and mature, so is Humanity! Adam is not simply the original man; he is also and most importantly the final man. A new Adam, a mature collective person is being called forth in and through the vocation of persons to form community and to love one another.

Mounier describes the whole of humanity as an "immense conspiracy of love hovering over each of its members."¹⁴ As the vocation of a person is the integrating force which unites the diverse aspects of his life, love is the bond or the unity of a community.¹⁵ And as the source of community, love is also the moving force of History. Recall Mounier's description of History as distinct from evolution. History tends to "the progressive universalization of groups into vaster and vaster communities which prepare the way for the final, total community of man."¹⁶ A conspiracy of love! The only difficulty is that too often History is wanting in conspirators, or its conspirators are duped by the counterfeits of love.

It is easy to see that not all forms of association promote community and advance History. Community occurs only when persons are united as persons. To the extent that anything less than personal bonds unite people, the groups that result will be less than personal. Groups that are held together by fear, by outward conformity, or by mutual survival interests are not communities. Political commitments, legal ties, and contractual obligations are not sufficient to bring men together as persons either. Not even the sharing of an intellectual vision or an ideology can be the basis of community. Genuine unity, concrete totalization, requires more than the distillation of reality into a simple idea or into a single system of ideas. History cannot be advanced through ideological totalities; it is a human project. History is not divorced from concrete histories any more than Humanity is a stranger to real men.¹⁷ To bind men together by some appendage to their person or by something less than the entire person is to create an organization but not an organism.

There are certain "organic conditions" necessary for an association or a society to blossom into community.¹⁸ When-

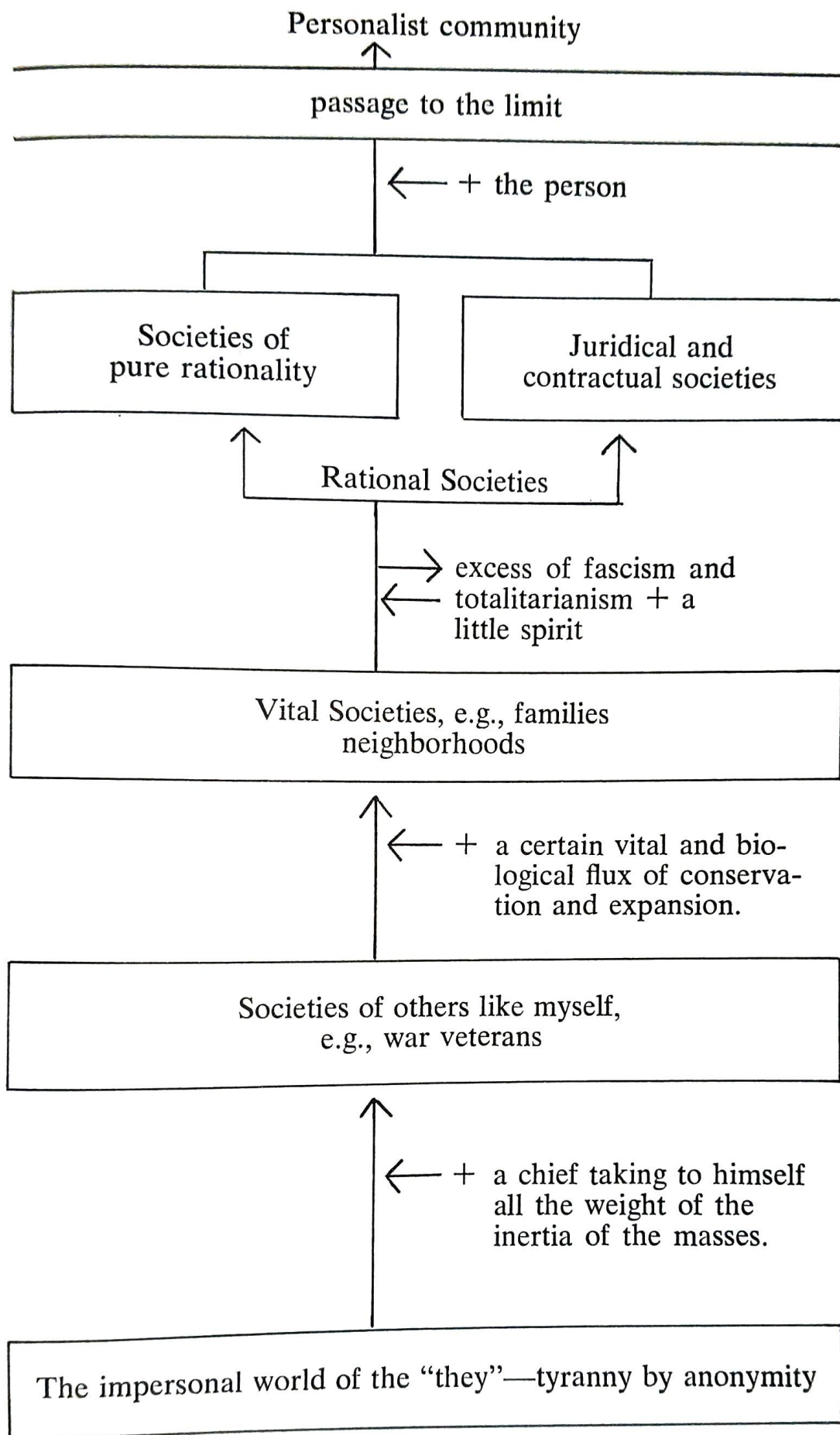
ever these conditions are not present, the growth of community is impeded and History is retarded. Mounier compares the emergence of community from its social structures to the emergence of a person from its structures as an individual.

The first step of my initiation into the personal life is the act of becoming conscious of the anonymity of my life up to now. The first step of my initiation into the communitarian life is the act of becoming conscious of the social indifference of my life so far—an indifference to others that existed because my life was not differentiated from others.¹⁹

Before one can reach the threshold of community, then, he must see the possibility of moving beyond an impersonal world.

Mounier rails against "*le monde de l'on*," the objective, impersonal world where every man is interchangeable with every other man. This is the world of the mob—anarchical, governed by what "people say" and by what "people do." The forces that create any sort of activity in this world are always anonymous or disguised. Composed of the masses of the mob, "human agglomerates which may be swayed at times by violent movements, but which are always without distinct responsibilities," the impersonal world is tyrannized by an anonymous "they"—by a "they" that is not a third person, but the epitome of the impersonal. There is no trace of community in this amorphous mass. *Le monde de l'on* is actually a depersonalized aggregate of individuals. Narcissism is its trademark and conformity or the desire to please its binding force. The impersonal world lies beneath the threshold where community begins.²⁰

In several of his works Mounier sketches a kind of hierarchy of group structures.²¹ Beginning with the impersonal world which is below the level of community in any degree and ending with the personalist community which is community in the superlative sense, Mounier outlines the degrees of community that typify specific social structures. One of his commentators has schematized this hierarchy in a diagram presented here in a slightly modified form.²²



Only when the members of a group can begin to distinguish themselves from one another and overcome their anonymity is any sort of community possible. The first degree of community appears when people begin to affirm their ties with others like themselves.

There is a moment when the individual with all his avarice seems to be definitively suffocated. It is when a mass of men are enkindled and say: "We others—we proletarians, we fascists, we veterans, we young people. . . ."²³

"*Sociétés nous autres*," Mounier calls these groups—"societies of others like myself."²⁴ Though the bonds which hold people together in such groups are rather flimsy, there is nevertheless a sense of purpose and a common will which are completely lacking in the impersonal world.

A group of "others like myself" finds cohesion in something beyond mere conformity. A value, a cause, a common experience draws the members together and elicits from them a measure of loyalty and commitment that approaches personal response. While the impersonal world is maintained by the inertia and indifference of its members, by its tendency to drift or to be swayed by the winds, the world of others like myself is anchored by a common cause or by a set of values that inspires generosity and sacrifice, even, sometimes, to the point of heroism.²⁵

Nevertheless, the society of "others like myself" embodies only the most elementary degree of community, and it does have certain built-in hazards. Conformity can be its trademark too—conformity to others like myself. A partisan, for example, might be expected to support the party line even to the point of abdicating his own responsibility. If he decides once and for all not to have any values apart from the values of the group, if he is determined to think only what the group thinks and to will only and whatever the group wills, he is bound to the body by conformity. He lives as a parasite, drawing his identity almost entirely from the identity of the group.

He recites what the party teaches, he absolves what the party justifies, and he receives his instructions like an automaton. The

"we" violently affirmed is not an appeal to responsible liberty. It allows him to flee from anguish, choice, and personal engagements.²⁶

In this society the person is likely to become alienated from himself. He turns over his individuality to the group; he allows himself to be dissolved and swallowed up by the muddy waters where his anchor lay.

In a group of others like myself men find a false security. If something good is accomplished, it is easy for each member to take pride and to claim a share in the credit. When things go wrong, no one in particular needs to feel guilty or to bear the blame. "Individualization of profits; collectivization of losses!" Mounier observes wryly.²⁷

Societies based on camaraderie, family ties, or patriotism are more open to community than either of the previous types of association. Members of such groups are often people who work together and support one another in an effort to achieve "the good life." These people belong to what Mounier calls the "vital society." One of the advantages of this kind of association is that the spirit of the group is open to the influence of its individual members. Consciously or unconsciously, members contribute to the spirit of the group and are at the same time available to its influence. However, the basic bond of a vital society is more biological than personal. Comfort, prosperity, peace, and prestige are values around which the group rallies.²⁸

One of the serious weaknesses of the vital society is its failure to recognize that life itself cannot be the supreme and controlling value for persons. Life is only worth living if there is within and beyond it something worth dying for. Life must not be mistaken for the deeper reality of the person. The person transcends his physical and biological life.²⁹

Life as such is not capable of universality and of giving itself, but only of affirmation and expansion.³⁰

A vital society—one which settles for life as its supreme value—remains a kind of surface association, a humane society for humans!

Those who structure rational societies hope to avoid the

shortcomings of the vital society by uniting men on the basis of reason rather than comfort. Vital pleasures are ephemeral; but reason can attain to what is universal, to that which escapes the limitations of both time and place. Reason gives man the capacity to range beyond his concrete circumstances and to get at what is common—at what is not particular and not unique. It provides man with the equipment necessary to discover principles, to build systems, and to deal with reality theoretically. It enables him to make reliable predictions and to communicate through language. To be sure, then, societies based on reason are more personal than the societies previously described.³¹

But rational societies can be organized so as to impede community and History too. Just as a person can avoid the demands of life by making a once and for all commitment to live by principles regardless of all concrete circumstances, so can society.

There are two types of rational societies: "the society of pure rationality" and the "contractual society." The former is based on a Utopian vision or on some less hopeful ideology. One of its presumptions is that unity of thought amounts to unity of persons.

Utopia is only a name for elaborate systems and unreal societies. There is Utopia wherever the historical projection which illuminates action is derived from a purely conceptual system instead of from a compound of supra-historical requirements with the historical situations into which they have to be introduced.³²

Personalism emphasizes not only the need to weld action to understanding, but it also insists that understanding be in touch with real historical situations—with the here and now conditions of men.

Another presupposition of the "society of pure rationality" is that there is *a* way to organize society which is the right way. The rationalist does not see himself as possessed by truth, but as possessing it. He attempts to unite men with the truth—the truth being that conception of reality to which he and his coterie subscribe. Since a rational society is organized on the basis

of "truth" any other form of organization must be false, and here is the hitch. "Believing in the infallibility of their system, these dogmatists are least disposed to allow men both the time and freedom required to arrive at truth."³³ Change, growth, development, creativity, are all foreign and unwelcome intruders in a society which has an immutable framework, for these foster treason against a system that embodies and makes available the whole of truth.

The second form of rational society does not rely so exclusively on reason. The "contractual society" acknowledges man's need to exercise freedom and to make decisions regarding his patterns of interaction. One of the profoundly Christian and Personalist presuppositions of the contractual society is that all men are equal. Its structure is meant to insure that all men will be treated justly and impartially. One of its objectives is to be objective. The contractual society strives to guarantee the same rights to everyone. However, it relies on criteria which are formal and impersonal and which are applied in every circumstance.³⁴

And here is precisely the drawback of the contractual society. The enforcement of laws can be confused with the administration of justice. Formal rights can be abused. The problems involved in creating community will not be solved by complicated legal systems, nor will calculating reason ever be able to compete with love in nourishing community.³⁵ The contractual society is organized on the basis of exchange. It is a stingy world which is preoccupied with maintaining balance and equilibrium. In such a universe there is no room for newness nor for generosity. *Giving* and *creating* are replaced by *exchange*. The contractual society is simply a modern version of the Greek world, closed and finished!³⁶

It has already been mentioned that community or a personal collectivity can emerge only when the proper conditions are present. Yet, no institution nor society can actually produce a community. Neither persons nor communities can ever acquire their spiritual liberty from outside themselves. The function of any regime or social structure is simply to reduce obstacles to the emergence of community.³⁷

What, then, are the conditions which most favor the development of community? There are several.

"It seems that both in our aspirations and in the course of history the trend towards the emergence of ever vaster communities is linked with the movement towards personalization," Mounier writes.³⁸ This movement, by which natural and artificial structures are progressively assimilated to the person, freeing him and being freed in turn, is a basic condition for the continual development of community. Presently man's physical condition and economic circumstances still "massively manage" his behavior. But the transformation of these situations is possible through technology; hence, the transformation of man's behavior is also possible!³⁹

Freedom establishes itself through the tension of obeying nature while transforming it, and community emerges through the tension of personalizing structures and struggling to control them while submitting to their discipline.⁴⁰ All of the preceding criticisms of impersonal structures notwithstanding, it is nevertheless Mounier's conviction that a certain amount of objectivity and impersonality is necessary for the existence of community.

If thought does not make itself communicable, and therefore, in a sense, impersonal, it is not thought but delirium. Science and objective reason are the indispensable conditions of intersubjectivity. And legal right also is no less necessary as mediator; it curbs biological egoism; it guarantees each person's existence; in the jungle of instincts and urges, it ensures a minimum of security in which the seed of personal life can germinate.⁴¹

And as the individual person needs a body which is opaque, incommunicable, and objective in order to mediate his communications, so does the community.

The personalization of nature, the transformation of the physical universe through technology, is the process by which a body is fashioned for Humanity.

Man is unique in his invention of tools and in his subsequent linking of them into systems of machinery that slowly frame a collective body for all humanity. The men of this twentieth century are bewildered to see this new and all powerful body

they are constructing. . . . It puts undreamed of powers into the hands of imbeciles. . . . Left to its own blind inertia it is the most powerful of forces making for depersonalization. It is all these things, however, only when regarded apart from the spirit that is promoting it as a means of liberation of man from natural servitude and to the reconquest of nature.⁴²

The ecological problems and the vertigo man is experiencing as a result of the rapid transformation of nature resemble growing pains. The difficulties and discomfort are real, but there is no need for panic, and there is good reason for forbearance. For "while we are still creating the collective body without which we shall still lack a collective soul, we shall suffer the teething troubles and growing pains and malignant fevers of the machine."⁴³

In addition to the personalization of nature, what other conditions are required for the development of genuine community? Mounier believes that it is the primary responsibility of every social regime to provide conditions wherein each person will be able to keep step with the drummer that he hears; that is, it must encourage persons to discover and to follow their unique vocations.⁴⁴ There is no real danger that the promotion of personal uniqueness will create chaos and a divided society, for vocation always involves a call to community as well as to diversity. It requires responsiveness to others—each person contributing to others what is his to offer, and receiving from others what is uniquely theirs to give.⁴⁵

In addition to fostering the realization of personal vocations, every society must root out all forms of human oppression and must insure persons an appropriate measure of privacy and independence. The principle of subsidiarity must be upheld and structures must be so organized that personal responsibility will be promoted along with "the greatest possible liberty for everyone."⁴⁶

Having cleared away obstacles to the growth of community and provided the proper conditions for its emergence, what sort of reality can be anticipated? Mounier provides his most concise description of the ideal personalist community in his *Personalist Manifesto*.

If we were to describe its ideal realization, we should describe it as a community in which each person would at all times be able to achieve his fruitful vocation in the totality and in which the communion of all in the totality would be the living outcome of the efforts of each one. Each one would have a place of his own in the whole which no one else could fill, but which would harmonize well with the whole. Love would be the primary tie and not any constraint or any economic or "vital" interest or any extrinsic apparatus. Each person would there find, in the common values transcending each one's own limitations of place and time, the tie that binds all members in the whole.⁴⁷

The community just described exists only in rare instances at this point in history, and with few exceptions, only among two or three persons.⁴⁸ But the realization of the ideal must be put into its historical perspective. It must be remembered that persons have only recently appeared, after billions of years of preparation, so communities of persons have, as yet, hardly had a chance to be conceived.⁴⁹

Unlike Marx, Mounier does not really expect this idea of community to be fully realized *in* History. The point at which men will have finally united in a personal community is the point at which History will have reached its end and the Kingdom of God will have been established. The ideal has a profound influence on History, however, and if the Kingdom will not be fully established *in* History, it will be done *through* History.⁵⁰

Regardless of whether it [the ideal community] is accepted as a guiding myth, or whether it is believed to be realizable beyond this life (as the Christian holds), it cannot but give a basic direction to the living History of the present.⁵¹

It would be easy to overlook the circumspect term *beyond* this life which Mounier uses here in propounding the Christian view. Notice that he does not say *after* this life. He does not have a two-world metaphysics. The fullness of community—the Kingdom of God—has some kind of limited existence during this life. It exists now as the very beyond which inspires movement, development, personalization, and history.⁵²

A temporal as well as an eternal reality, the Kingdom of God must be understood as a partly divine and partly human creation.⁵³ From one perspective it can be seen as the incarnation of the eternal in the temporal world. From another perspective, it can be understood as the assimilation of the temporal into the eternal—as the divinization of the cosmos and of man.⁵⁴ There is, then, within universal History, a sacred history which is its transcendent dimension.

If the Kingdom of God starts from this hour, it is also permissible to think that the cosmos also contains a sacred history linked with the history of human activity.⁵⁵

This sacred history is not foreign to secular history, nor does it occur in a spirit world remote from this world. Rather, sacred history and profane history are inextricably mingled. Both are constitutive of universal History.⁵⁶

Mounier does not envision the Kingdom of God as some distant place “up there” prepared from all eternity for those who die to take up residence in it. The Kingdom can exist only when all men have been reunited among themselves and with God, and this reconciliation occurs through history, or not at all. He repudiates the Lutheran notion that justification occurs in a once and for all moment that lifts salvation outside of time.

For Luther, justification is a favor out of time, entire and instantaneous, with which duration has no more to do than works.⁵⁷

Catholic theology holds that salvation is a temporal affair. And Christians have, for the most part, maintained that justification will be complete only after a final collective judgment.

The last judgment is a collective judgment. . . . For a long time Christian tradition was unwilling to admit that even the elect could attain the full beatific vision before collective consecration had taken place.⁵⁸

Mounier returns to this early and long-standing tradition, preferring the company of the Church Fathers to the fellowship of

sulky Christians, hostile to this life and waiting with resignation to be wafted up into another.⁵⁹

The Kingdom of God will not be the petrification of reality, then, but the point at which History will have achieved its purpose of opening the world out onto a "fourth dimension of infinite liberality." Time and change will not be suppressed, but "the indefiniteness of temporal and physical extension will be replaced by the indefiniteness or rather an infinity of superabundance."⁶⁰

Nebulous platitudes? Perhaps. But it would be a betrayal of his own grasp of reality if Mounier tried to write about the Kingdom with clarity and lucidity. Nothing annoys him more than those assassins of darkness and mystery who describe without hesitation the topography of heaven, its politics, and the intentions of the deity.

One sees bigoted fanatics handling and fingering divine things with an indiscretion which turns one's stomach, pronouncing without difficulty upon the intentions of God and the mysteries of history.⁶¹

No one can be clear about the Kingdom nor about the outcome of History. It is impossible to say with certitude whether progression or regression is its course. Thus, the man of faith shares in the darkness of his unbelieving brothers. "Being so made as to create obscurity by the very audacity of his inquiry, he can escape neither creative anguish nor the combat in the night."⁶²

Though Mounier approaches History with an attitude of optimism, it is one of optimism tempered by a recognition that there is also evil in the world. If History progresses, its advancement is not direct. It follows a pattern of asceticism rather than ascent. Asceticism is the kind of growth or development that occurs only through some personal purgation, losses, and suffering. The essence of asceticism consists of "irreversible losses, woundings, retreats, darkness and crisis."⁶³ It suggests that the sort of catastrophic end that *anti-moderne* prophets foretell with such terrifying frenzy is not entirely impossible.

There is an unbridgeable gulf between an optimism of history which thinks in terms of linear progress, of humanity advancing in monochordial time through its progress in organization, and the tragic optimism of the Christian, for whom the meaning of progress is never entirely definable, certainly not outside the paradox of the Crucifixion, and who can never, even up to the last, exclude the possibility of demoniac catastrophe.⁶⁴

Mankind has, after all, come to a point in History where it can destroy itself. In the past the suicide of individuals was possible, but now the "suicide" of humanity can actually occur. Man has it within his power to do away with himself.⁶⁵ Optimism in the face of such a real possibility could hardly be unmitigated.

It is clear, then, that the optimism of Mounier is not the "pious" or religious optimism of those "who simply organize a little corner of spiritual tranquility somewhere in the suburbs of the Christian adventure."⁶⁶ Nor is it the optimism of the humanist whose belief that nothing can interfere with progress amounts to a kind of happy fatalism. Both of these affective systems are a source of comfort to men who have become adept at intellectual escape. Mounier eschews all optimism and security that are bought at the expense of freedom.

Though his optimism is not unqualified, Mounier cannot be brought into the pessimistic camp of certain Existentialists, either. His attitude can no more be translated into the happy pessimism of Camus or Nietzsche, than it can be displayed as a case of "petty parochial good humor." The more morose, who dwell on the hell that men can make for other men, and on the utter futility of men's desires, have blind spots just as serious as those of the simple optimist. Experience and reason contest their view that time and place are discontinuous and that there is no universe. Their contention that every individual is totally discrete—cut off from others by space and from themselves by time, is also contradicted by the experience of continuity, of fidelity, and of personal communion.⁶⁷ Furthermore, their exaltation of serenity and cheerfulness in the face of the absurd is a case of misplaced praise. Gracious grit in the face of absurdity has no more merit than the attitude of pretentious joy exhibited by the naive or pious optimist.

In what, then, is the tragic optimism of Mounier rooted? In his conviction that there is no absolute evil!

There is no essential disqualification, no absolute evil in the world, nature, flesh, matter, nor, in consequence, in the *opus humanum* which would make history fundamentally ignoble and predestine it to the lot of irremediable decadence.⁶⁸

Furthermore, the generosity of God, which is sacramentalized in the generosity of persons, also offers him assurance that within the human adventure, evil can always be outdone.

The presence of evil in the world is best described in the biblical parable of the weeds and the wheat. Mounier takes this story as a most apt image of History.

The parable of the tares and the wheat is the truest symbol of the Christian vision of History. An accursed harvest springs up throughout the years to make all human Utopias ineffectual and to shatter the dream of a world which shall become innocent from the moment it is so decreed: such is the role of "Christian pessimism." But growing tirelessly amidst these unhallowed fields is the kingdom of God, named and unnamed, with slow irresistible force.⁶⁹

History does not root up the tares; in fact, it seems to nourish them. But the wheat does not yield; it grows with a "slow, irresistible force."⁶⁹

There is a fundamental ambiguity in Mounier's references to evil, one which creates a serious problem and calls into question the basis for his optimism. In the last of his books, *Personalism*, Mounier asserts that evil can exist only when and where there are persons. Without personality, there can be disorder, but there cannot be evil. Evil, the countersign of freedom, is present only in "consciences and in conspiracies of consciences." Its distinguishing feature is its power of corrupting and undoing persons.⁷⁰

Perhaps it is because evil cannot have any existence independent of persons that Mounier is moved to claim that there is no absolute evil. But if there is no absolute evil, there is, nevertheless, evil that is absolute.

But who can deny the absolute character of evil in certain of its forms? One may try to ascribe it to some impersonal order that depends on the existence of evil (as did Leibnitz, and Malebranche). But this is to juggle away the personal experience we have of it—of its shocking enormity, and its singular fascination, equal to that of the highest values.⁷¹

A rhetorical question about the absolute character of evil should not be taken too seriously. No doubt Mounier is simply asking: How can evil have the impact that it has and yet be explained away as it so often has been, as an instance of nothingness? How can nothingness be so active and aggressive—so personal?⁷² However, the statement that follows is very distressing and not so easily dismissed. It is this:

*For the Christian, evil is indeed a Person, as is the Good.*⁷³
(Italics added)

From one who sees the person as an absolute having ultimate value, this is, to say the least, a disturbing and mystifying statement.⁷⁴ For either evil is not a person, or a person is not what Mounier has said it is. By definition, or as close as he can come to one, Mounier describes the person as generous, self-giving, creative, and loving—everything that evil is not!⁷⁵

In his discussion of evil, Mounier explains that freedom, which is the mode of being a person, arises out of a void. Because freedom emerges from nothingness, because it comes into being from the void, it includes the “spontaneity of negation” as well as the “spontaneity of existence.” It is perhaps the “spontaneity of negation” which Mounier is willing, by way of analogy, to call “person.”⁷⁶

A rather disconcerting question arises from Mounier’s assertion that evil is a person. It is this: if evil is somehow a person, does it have the capacity for creating a community of evil? One shudders at the thought, but just as experience bears out Mounier’s analysis of interpersonal communion, it also bears out the possibility of a third personality being formed in evil and emerging from “a conspiracy of consciences.”

A recent American film documents a terrifying instance of

this sort of communion. In the film adaptation of Truman Capote's book *In Cold Blood*, psychiatrists from the Menninger Institute reported that two men on trial for the vicious murder of an entire family, were individually incapable of committing the atrocities which together they perpetrated. It seems that together the two became a third personality capable of and responsible for the crime they could not have committed individually! An I, a Thou, and a We?⁷⁷

Now in light of a person's potential for fostering evil, or at least for occasioning it, is the person still to be considered an ultimate value? And is the process of personalization, which up to this point has been enthusiastically extolled, to be promoted unreservedly? Or is it possible that personalization and History will create evil persons and communities of evil which will ultimately prevail?

Mounier's response to the question is reassuring only to the person who is already optimistic. Quick to acknowledge that freedom includes the possibility of choosing dis-values as well as values, he protests: "I am scared of the fool who thinks that a scientist, or his agent, faced with two buttons, one to release universal prosperity, and the other an integral atomic explosion, will be led by simple scientific virtue to press the button of prosperity. . . . The imminence of supreme folly henceforward running side by side with reason, like death in the shadow of life, will not perhaps make it any easier to be wise."⁷⁸ But while Mounier admits that there is a possibility that evil will ultimately prevail—or at least the "void"—his assurance that the possibility shall not become the reality is generated by a stubborn and optimistic faith:

Is it then being or the void, is it evil or is it good, that in the end prevails? A kind of joyous assurance, linked with an expansive personal experience, inclines one to the optimistic reply. But neither experience nor reason can answer this question. Those who can, whether Christians or not, do so under guidance of a faith that reaches beyond all experience.⁷⁹

His own faith is that though the Kingdom of Satan can be consolidated or extended, it cannot actually make progress, for

"it has no promise of life; already overcome by the Incarnation, it is losing ground, if it is not by any means dispossessed."⁸⁰ It should be obvious, too, that those who insist that evil shall have the upper hand, do so as an expression of their faith. Like an optical illusion, History can be viewed from more than one perspective.

Sacramentality of Events

If faith is finally the only ground on which the optimism of Mounier can rest, its soil is fertilized by experience and reason. However, like the soil in the parable of the tares and wheat, "faith" can and does support the growth of pessimism just as surely as it sustains Christian optimism.

Experience, and at the broader level, events, seem to indicate to Mounier that goodness will prevail, even though every event is "impure, mixed, ambiguous," and capable of fitting into an imaginary framework in which evil triumphs.

Though he admits theoretically that History could be a headlong rush into decadence, Mounier is so convinced that this is not its direction that he exhibits a marked hostility and intolerance of those who hold an opposing view—particularly those who do so in the name of Christianity.

These sick or savage prophets, anti-modern to the bone, have often a curious gift for concealing their moods and their secret failures under an impressive array of historical evidence and causal sequences. They do but disclose their own situation in the world. When they try to disguise it by reference to a Christian eschatology, they usurp and falsify words. Even photography, fidelity itself, can make any face grotesque by a careful placing of shadows. A Christian catastrophism can only be achieved by systematic distortion, a forced reaction against a contrary viewpoint, a mean-minded interpretation of history, and complex personal maladjustments.⁸¹

Since life and events are experienced by every person differently, this judgment seems a bit severe. However, no event presents a person with its meaning whole and entire. The mean-

ing of events is both given to and created by the persons involved in them. Pessimistic prophets infuriate Mounier because by interpreting History as a "tumbling into malediction" they insinuate a negative meaning into each event and impregnate history with the evils they foresee.⁸²

Like sacraments, events affect what they signify. What they mean is what they are. The person for whom the event appears to be evil will reap evil from it. The person who perceives the event as good will reap its goodness.

Is this to say that events derive their meaning only from the subjective attitudes of men? Certainly not. The meaning of an event is both received by men and shaped by them.⁸³ Were events entirely subjective occurrences they would be totally unintelligible. They would be unique, incommunicable, and entirely private. Each person could make of them whatever he would. But events intrude upon the person and make demands on him. "An event, if I know how to accept it, is precisely the revelation of all that is foreign; it is the revelation of nature, of man, and for some, of more than man. It delineates the meeting of *the* universe with my universe."⁸⁴

Mounier looks at events from two perspectives. On the one hand he sees them as "divine advances"—as God's communications in the dialogue of History. On the other hand, he sees them as man's word in this ontological conversation.⁸⁵

His choice of the dialogue as an analogue for History is an exceptionally appropriate one, since it conveys two of Mounier's most difficult and crucial conceptions of History: (1) that the development of History occurs through a process of co-creation, and (2) that events can be intelligible without yielding at any given moment their entire meaning. Like the words and statements in any good conversation, events convey a meaning, but a meaning that is susceptible of misinterpretation and that is continually subject to revision as the context in which it appears expands. It is for this reason that Mounier asserts:

One might say that the meaning of each historical event can only be clear when there is a full awareness of the totality of History. . . . In this vertical quasi-unintelligibility of history we cannot

set our course by any fixed stars. We are as likely to discover the favourable or hostile nature of the country by the quality of the atmosphere, the changing winds, the reflections on the water, by a vital well or ill-being in ourselves, as by the slow passage of the constellation.⁸⁶

It is more appropriate that persons look upon events as suggestions, as provocations to action, as indications of the direction of life and history, than that they consider them to be infallible and clear communiqués, announcing that the will of God is being realized.⁸⁷

An empirical approach to events shows them to be the outcome of personal action and of human decisions. They happen because of the choices men have made; nevertheless, events seldom realize the intentions of men.

History is not independent of the will of men, but nevertheless it develops in the main outside, even against men's intentions, and produces effects quite different from those which had been foreseen.⁸⁸

Events often comport persons into situations they would never choose. And even when an event does seem to realize a person's intentions, it often has ramifications that extend far beyond the original desire and that may even contradict it.

Whose will does prevail in History, then? Is it possible that events which appear to be the outcome of personal activity are actually the realization of a divine intent? Are events simply a masqueraded manifestation of God's will?

There are some who would be quick to purport that every event has been directly intended by God from all eternity as a part of his providential design. The problem with this sort of image of events and of History is, of course, that man really has nothing to say about it.⁸⁹ God becomes a puppeteer who controls all that happens while holding the puppets responsible. Not only is man's dignity and freedom mocked by this grotesque caricature, but God himself appears as some kind of deceitful ogre.⁹⁰

How, then, can events be viewed? As the result of men's will? Of God's will? Of both, or of neither?

If History, as a sequence of events, is a dialogue and a co-creation, as Mounier claims it is, then obviously it must result from both.⁹¹ But now the answer to a very basic question is being presupposed. What evidence is there that God has any hand in History at all? Why bring God into a picture that seems to be complete without him? Is it not sufficient to understand history as the product of chance, as the outcome of converging natural and human forces and the intention of neither God nor man?

Mounier does not think so. There is a transcendent dimension to events that makes them more than a simple interstice in the flow of History. It is true that viewed as past or as a *fait accompli*, each event can be understood simply as a human product, or if you prefer, as a child of chance, brought about by a convergence of natural forces and personal activity. An event is that which has already happened, and it has occurred because people have made choices and decisions. But there is another dimension to every event which might be called the "divine" or the "transcendent" dimension. An event often becomes an invitation to further choices—to further expressions of freedom. Persons feel *called upon* to make a whole new round of decisions and to create succeeding events in a response to what has already occurred. With an eye to the future rather than the past, then, the event can be seen as the challenge of a vocation. "It [the event] is properly what I do not possess, what I do not beget, a setback, and the call to set forth."⁹²

Let us press this issue further. Is there any reason to believe that someone or something beyond the world of finite persons and of nature is soliciting this response? What moves Mounier to relate the call to a transcendent and eternal mystery, as he so often does:

It (my vocation) is not like a ready-made idea that I would only have to decipher and realize. It transcends my existence as the eternal transcends the temporal, and yet bound up with the mystery of liberty, it is in a very real sense worked out by ourselves in collaboration with the Divine intention; it undergoes sundry setbacks, warpings, accelerations, according to the way I respond to the events—to the Divine advances.⁹³

Is there any evidence that a divine Person is issuing an invitation through events? What supports Mounier's belief that man can, in responding to his situation, not only humanize the world, but "render it divine through his own participation in divinity"?⁹⁴ And how does he perceive that "fourth dimension of infinite liberality"—that presence of the eternal in History that makes of it something more than a pure relativity and an indifferent swarming of events?⁹⁵

Perhaps the best means of responding to all these questions is to provide a concise review. We have already surveyed the evidence supporting the view that History is progressive. The inertia of matter and the laws of entropy notwithstanding, the universe has over vast periods of time become more and more organized and more and more personal. Spirit seems to be at work in matter.⁹⁶

We have also seen that History, while it is progressive, must also be eschatological. The *must* in this instance is an expression of moral necessity. If History had no *eschaton*, it would "resolve itself into the unending and laborious creation of a final inheriting caste." History is only rescued from the "immoral and massive alienation of humanity" if there is an eternal kingdom beyond History into which all of Mankind can be assumed.⁹⁷

There are also axiological reasons for believing that the call inviting men to create History is a call from, and an invitation to, transcendence. Unless there are some values that mean more than life itself, Mounier asserts, then life is not worth living.

To desire life at all costs is, some day, to buy life at the price of all reason for living. We have no authentic existence until we have an interior stronghold of values or of devotion against which we do not believe that the fear of death itself could prevail.⁹⁸

Values that permeate the historical moment and that lead a person to forsake his history, or better, to culminate it in a response which is a total gift of self, are surely testimony to the intimate presence in each person of a reality that also exists beyond life and beyond time—to the immanence of a trans-

cendence. "Personalists cannot willingly surrender the person to anything impersonal, and most of them seek in one way or another to personalize these values. The Christian Personalist goes the whole way, and deduces all values from the unique appeal of one Supreme Person."⁹⁹

Summary

At first blush it seems that there can be no universal History except at the expense of individual histories. However, as one reflects on the actions that are characteristic of the person, it becomes apparent that attempts at communion and love are the beginnings of a shared history. As persons strive to create communities, which are really corporate persons, they reveal the *possibility* of a History which could be both personal and universal.

Efforts at developing a shared history, that is, a community, seem to be the stuff of recorded history, and what makes History's direction discernible. Yet, these attempts at establishing community, often misdirected and doomed to frustration (as history also records), fail because they do not engage the entire person. When economic constraints, legal obligations, or ideological bonds are the primary cohesive force of any human group, there will be a society of sorts, but there will not be a community. The primary bond of a community, the only one which encompasses the entire person, is love.

Although social structures and institutions cannot cause communities, they can create the conditions which favor or impede their emergence. The same thing can be said for the organization of the material universe. For while the conditions of matter cannot produce a community, they can provide a body for the developing collective person—a body without which its soul cannot exist.

Another requisite for the realization of community is the promotion of freedom. Not only must all forms of oppression be eradicated, but positive support and encouragement . . . t be

offered to help each person discover his unique vocation and embrace it.

The creation of a universal community of the "New Man" is not simply *an* historical task; it is *the* task of History. It *is* History! However, if History is a creative process, when the creation has been completed History will have been completed too. Hence, the New Man—the Personalist Community—must be a transhistoric, eschatological creature. No community located in History could be its substitute, no matter how comprehensive it might be, for such a community would exist only in the present to the exclusion of the past. It would not then be truly universal. So, though the Kingdom of God comes into being through time and History, it transcends both.

If there is any assurance that the Kingdom will actually arrive, it does not come packaged in demonstration kits, nor in the proof systems so dear to the rationalist. There *are* reasons for believing that the personalist community will become a reality, and that History will accomplish its task; but there are also reasons for believing that it will not! The presence of evil, for example, competes with the presence of goodness in soliciting faith and in providing ground for the belief that "the spontaneity of negation" will in the end prevail.¹⁰⁰ For though the thrust of History seems to have been towards the development of vaster and vaster communities of persons, it seems also to have been towards the development of new and more powerful forces of destruction. True, the bodies of men have been extended through technology, and the body of a new Mankind seems to be developing. But History has likewise generated and organized technological forces capable of destroying Mankind and its centuries of accomplishments in a single fleeting moment.¹⁰¹

A thoughtful person would find it difficult to conjure up an unqualifiedly optimistic view of History. But there is no compelling reason to be absolutely pessimistic either. As Mounier sees it, evil is capable of "being" only in the company of persons. There is, therefore, no absolute evil—no evil that exists in utter independence. On the other hand, there is, Mounier believes, a transcendent Goodness—a spiritual, transpersonal

reality that is hidden and that "we lay hold on . . . better through our own striving towards it than through the faltering even grotesque representations we often impose on it."¹⁰² It is present sacramentally in historical events, that is, it is immanent in History while it also transcends History. It is this personal absolute that has initiated and that sustains a dialogue, that speaks to men through events, and that guides them towards a common, though obscure destiny.

As is true in every dialogue, History is at least semi-intelligible, but its entire significance will be known only when History has been brought to a conclusion. It is also a co-creation. That is, at any given moment it is not simply the outcome of God's intentions nor of man's, but is the result of the We; it is the expression of the collective person who is created through the communion of men with other men, and ultimately with God. The fact that people aspire to community and feel called upon to create it suggests that a Transcendent Being has issued an invitation to them to pursue this destiny which can only be fully realized beyond time. Man's willingness to die for the sake of values or of truths that mean more to him than life, seems also to manifest a certain confidence that Life is super-abundant and incapable of being limited within the confines of time.

5. A Personalist View of History

The present quest for an understanding of Mounier's Personalist view of History has led us through a sketchy history of *history* up to a confrontation with a History composed of histories. Let us review for a moment the route.

A brief history of *history* revealed that there has been an evolution in the meaning of the word *history*. *History* was originally an inquiry; eventually it came to mean a record of past events, and then the sequence of events themselves. The ancient Greeks distinguished the movements of nature from the movements of history. The movements of nature were consistent, predictable, rational, and conservative or right-wing; the movements of history were unpredictable, irrational, libertarian, and left-wing! History was a result of chance, that is, it was the result of converging human decisions and natural forces. It was the residue of nature's movements, a kind of cosmic excrement.

Judeo-Christian tradition contradicted this view of history. It acknowledged that history was a *super*-natural order and only incidentally a source of disorder. History could be envisioned as the realization of an order transcending nature and transforming it. The new order was only semi-intelligible because it was still being realized. Men would find their meaning, their reason for being, not simply in the rhythms of nature, but also in the whole score and orchestration of History. Just as music has no existence without duration, so man has no existence without History.¹

The Judeo-Christian tradition describes the human condition as "fallen." Adam, Mankind, is fragmented; he was broken by a fall. However, unlike Humpty Dumpty, all the king's horses and all the king's men can put Mankind back together again. This is the task of men in History. Man's redemption is understood as progress in atonement (at-one-ment); it is the

re-creation of Mankind. In History, individual men are being reconciled with each other and with God through love, and from their reconciliation a community or collective person is emerging.

Some recent scientific myths seem to be compatible with this religious myth. When History is viewed as the dialectical antithesis of the evolutionary process it appears to be an expansive tendency which unifies individuals, promotes the development of a humanly organized and constructed world, and supports the emergence of communities. History is the manifestation of what Teilhard calls *radial energy*; it is a movement of synthesis and totalization.²

Since history, taken as a record of the past, seems to reveal an overall pattern of progress, and since matter appears to be governed by the law of entropy, there must be some additional dimension of physical reality that accounts for progress. Mounier chooses to call the progressive thrust within material reality *spirit*. He sees each person as an incarnate spirit in whom the eternal penetrates the temporal. Spirit is that dimension of reality which makes presence possible. Because of presence, communication can occur and vocations can be discerned. Spirit is, in other words, the personal dimension of reality.³

As an incarnate spirit, a person is localized in a particular time and place and is situated in a unique set of circumstances. He is not, however, a soul incarcerated in a body, nor a subjective, solipsistic cell. He is a being capable of communication and of dialogue. He can transcend his physical limitations and embrace the whole universe. His vocation is to be ec-centric, that is, he is called away from an ego-centric existence to a life centered on the world that exists beyond himself. As a presence or a being-towards, the person is not aloof or static. He is communicative, generous, creative. And because he is all of these, he promotes newness, absolute beginnings, hence progress and history.

A person is free because he is given response-ability for his own destiny! He is limited by his humanity, but he transcends nature and is not provided with a "natural end." His freedom, his power of response, promotes unity not at a speculative or

theoretical level, but at the concrete personal level. He can help to redeem the world through a knowing that is a loving, that is, through a knowing that involves self-donation and the communication of existence. His is not the knowledge of a scientist, but the knowledge of an artist. And his artifact is not a body of information, but the body of a community—of a collective person.

There does appear to be a conflict in Mounier's thought when one tries to reconcile his idea that individual persons create their own histories and their own destinies and are not component parts of a design that simply unfolds in time—with the idea that there is a single, universal History that encompasses all individual histories and that has a meaning of its own.

Mounier insists that there is a universal History that transcends the histories of individual persons, and he wants to attribute its creation to men; but he also wants to attribute its creation to God. The problem is this: If History is the realization of one of God's designs, if its meaning or significance is determined by God before men are ever caught up in it, then men are not really free to be the artisans of their own history. They are constitutive elements of a universal History. The part they play in the overall design must be determined for them, hence, they contribute mechanically, but not freely to its realization.

However, if universal History is the co-creation of free men, as Mounier insists it is, then it must not really be history, in the proper sense of the term. History with a capital H would simply result from a convergence of histories, a convergence which is not itself intended by any person or persons. The unity of such a History would be the result of mathematics, not of personal intentions. History would be a compilation of histories, not a manifestation and creation of persons.

How can there be a History whose span is more extensive than the span of any human life, a comprehensive movement that is genuinely history, and that does not override the histories of men?

If individual histories can be shared in such a way that their combination is personal rather than mathematical, then a universal History might be possible. Mounier sees this occurring

when individual persons who love one another begin to create communities. Though there is much difficulty in uniting persons at a level where community will occur, when this does happen, the communities that result from personal union are themselves "really and not symbolically, persons—collective persons." Collective persons, persons of persons can also be a source of history. Thus a universal History could conceivably be the history of a universal collective person.

Mounier envisions the tendency of persons to associate and to form communities as an indication that a universal community is developing. He thinks of this universal community as the ideal Personalist Community, as the Kingdom of God, as the Communion of Saints. When he speaks of it from the perspective of its being a collective person he understands it to be the "Mystical Body of Christ," the "human absolute," the New Mankind.

Mounier's conviction that the universal Personalist Community will be realized is based on a faith that must also acknowledge the aggressive power of evil. Evil can occur only in the presence of persons, and it seems at times to be itself a person, even a collective person! However, Mounier does not believe that evil can be personal in the fullest sense. It is not rooted in *being*, but in the *void*. Evil is a spontaneity of negation, the dialectical antithesis of a spontaneity of being. It can only exist within a finite person, individual or collective. There is an absolute Person in whom there is no evil because he is an infinity of super-abundance who has no commerce with "the void," but there is no absolute evil.

Any assurance that there is an Absolute *Person*, that being rather than the void will in the end prevail, comes from evidence so inconclusive that it cannot *compel* assent. However, the immanence of Spirit in the physical universe (made evident through progress), the attempts of persons to surpass themselves, the attraction of values that mean more to men than life itself, and the experience of an eternal element in one's temporal relationships (fidelity) are all strong indications that a personal Absolute is not only immanent in History, but that he also exists beyond it.⁴

The Problem Revisited

Perhaps by now the problems articulated at the beginning of this work have been sharpened. Perhaps they have become blurred and faded. Possibly they have even been resolved. Let us take another look at them.

The problems stated in the first chapter might be summed up as follows:⁵

1. If there is a unified History, if the ensemble of events is not a chaos, but a meaningful whole, how can individual men within History be free to create their own histories?

2. If History is the co-creation of free men, how can the meaning of History and of events be revealed or given to men? Shouldn't their meaning be given by men?

3. If only a consciousness of the totality of History can reveal the meaning of events, how can the ensemble of events reveal within History the direction and significance of History?

4. If human nature or the human absolute is the "totality of human history" how will the ensemble man-nature reveal at any point in time the direction and significance of History?

Mounier has affirmed the antecedent or *if* clause in each of these hypothetical questions. No wonder that at least one of his commentators has insisted that there is a "radical conflict" in Mounier's understanding of History.⁶

In a tone of intense concern, the same commentator has predicted that someone will surely come along who will, in the name and in the service of Personalism, do violence to Mounier's thought—even betray it—by trying to systematize it. What follows may be the betrayal that was anticipated. It is meant to be the exposition of a synthesis—a synthesis that is present in Mounier's thought as one of those "unset gems" that can be so easily overlooked.

History as Dialogue and Personalization

What becomes of this conflict if History, that is, universal History is understood as a dialogue? What becomes of the con-

flict if History is understood as a process of personalization? These are images of History that Mounier offers. Let us explore them in some detail.

A dialogue can have meaning and direction; it can have significance—*sens*, if you will. But the meaning of a dialogue cannot be written in advance. It is not simply a mechanical unfolding of meanings, but is a process of communication that is progressive, spontaneous, and intelligible. It is a co-creation and it cannot occur except as co-creation. And just as there is no way of knowing in advance how a dialogue will unfold, so there is no way of anticipating accurately how History will unfold.

Is there an abridgement of freedom when, within this dialogue of History, an event “by violence penetrates us and carries us away and thrusts us transfigured there, where we would not know how to go were we to compose the ways?” Perhaps. However, men usually do not believe that freedom has been destroyed when, in a dialogue they are led into new and unexplored areas—into areas that they would not know how to enter if they were to compose the ways.⁷ If events thrust upon them new lights, new limits, and new fields to be explored, do these not actually promote freedom by soliciting a new set of responses?

In fact, since freedom is a power of response, a person is not only free when he is engaged in dialogue, he is not free unless he is so engaged. Whether it is another person, or an event, or nature that presents him with some meaning that he did not ask for or anticipate makes little difference.

To be sure, one who is participating in conversation or dialogue is not entirely unrestricted. He must, for example, relate to the intent of those engaged in the conversation and to the theme they have already established. If, after his entry into the conversation, he wishes to change its tone or direction, he cannot do so and remain engaged without a consenting *response* from the others. The limits of dialogue, then, are the limits of communication. If communication or mutual responsiveness (freedom) breaks down among all those engaged, then the dialogue cannot continue at all. If it breaks down for one or

another of the participants, they may become disengaged without disrupting the entire conversation.⁸

A dialogue cannot occur without a sharing of one's thoughts and feelings. But at its deepest level dialogue is progress in communion—a process of personalization. It is at this level that History occurs, i.e., at the level of personal commitment. For History is not a verbal dialogue, but a dialogue of being. It is not a process of sharing thoughts, but a progress in creating persons.

If history is a process of personalization, then there is no longer a serious problem in speaking of a universal History and of a History that is the co-creation of free men. For through love, persons are capable of creating communities, persons of persons, which could eventually expand to a point where a universal community, a universal collective Person would exist as the source of a universal History! This collective person would recapitulate and assume all of history into his identity. He would be the Word of God expressed in the History of Man.

Let us return to our questions.

1. How can individual men be free to create their own histories if there is a unified or universal History?

There could be no universal History if men were not free. It is because men are free and thus capable of uniting their histories that there is some promise of a unified or universal History.

2. If History is the co-creation of free men, how can the meaning of events be revealed to men? Shouldn't their meaning be given by men?

Unless persons are open to receiving reality as it is given to them in events, they will have no opportunity to create and to give meaning to their own histories and to events. For what events reveal are not definitive, once and for all meanings, but sets of possibilities which are real, intelligible, and the stuff to which men may, through their creative activity, give new meanings.

3. If only an awareness of the whole of History can reveal the meaning of events, how can the ensemble of events reveal within History a direction and significance?

Events are like words in a sentence, or like sentences in a dialogue. They convey a meaning, but their entire and definitive meaning can only be ascertained when they are seen within the context of the whole. From the sentences within a dialogue, one can discern its direction and significance, but only when the dialogue has been concluded will the entire meaning of each sentence be known and the outcome of the dialogue be clear.

4. If human nature or the human absolute is the "totality of history," how will the ensemble man-nature reveal at any point in time the direction and significance of History?

This question mimics the last one, and so does its answer. Though human nature is not complete and finished, neither is it entirely meaningless. The human absolute is coming into being. Human nature is not complete, but it does reveal in an incomplete and partial manner the direction and significance of History.

There is yet another problem that must be faced. It is this. If God utters his Word in History, if he too is involved in the dialogue of History as one of its participants, then he must somehow be dependent upon men. For if he really participates in the dialogue he too must listen and be responsive. Mounier acknowledges that this is one of the implications of the view that men are really and not only in some honorary way, cooperators in the divine plan.

There is, in a sense, an expectation, one can almost say (in human terms) an uncertainty, a risk of God with regard to the unfolding and the end of the adventure.⁹

He is quick to point out, however, that the line of mastery is fixed, for Christ has already conquered.¹⁰ It is difficult to understand just what Mounier understands by Christ's conquest. And it is more difficult to see how there can be a line of mastery or direction for History that still leaves persons free. Perhaps another of the statements in which Mounier uses the image of the dialogue will yield some idea of what this line of mastery might be. In discussing the ineffability and uniqueness of each person, Mounier writes:

If the person of a Christian is constituted by way of a singular divine intention prolonged in an inexpressible dialogue of advances and responses made between a free will and the unfathomable course of Providence, then its gist will be by definition inaccessible and its essence incapable of expression. This is what moral theology expresses by putting in the innermost being of each of us a "secret of the Heart" to which no one has access, neither man nor angel, but only God.¹¹

God has a *prolonged intention* which he continually and patiently tries to communicate to the innermost being of each person. He is dependent as a father who intends the freedom of his children is dependent on them. He must wait for them to assume the freedom he intends, and although his intention ultimately remains the same, he is influenced by particular responses and must react to these. He will not seek to impose freedom, but to elicit it. God has all the time in the world to realize his intentions, and he does not need to trample on men's freedom to accomplish his purpose.

The meaning that God seems to want history to have is that free persons give their meaning to History. And since free persons can only maintain their freedom and their personhood by becoming creatively united with others, it seems that History, realizing both God's intentions and the intentions of men who act as persons, will be a progressive and unifying movement which will bring together all of reality from the universes of space and of time. "The need of personal fulfillment, the point and instrument of universal history is not divorced from the needs of humanity, as such. When the future of man is taken in all its dimensions, material, inward, transcendental History appears as . . . the perpetual crisis of a mounting dialectic of unification and perfection."¹²

Notes

CHAPTER 1

1. "Présence de Françoise. Histoire de notre petite Françoise qui paraît glisser sur des jours sans histoire." Emmanuel Mounier, Entretiens X, 28 août 1940, *Mounier et sa génération, Oeuvres de Mounier: Recueils posthumes Correspondance*, Tome IV (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963), p. 670. Hereafter cited as *Sa Génération*, IV. The passages quoted in English throughout this work will be taken from the published English translations when there is one. All other translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. A Roman numeral after the title of any of Mounier's works will indicate the volume of *Oeuvres de Mounier* in which it appears.

2. "Ce miracle qui s'est un jour brisé, cette promesse sur qui s'est refermée la légère porte d'un sourire aboli, d'un regard distrait, d'une main sans projets. . . ." Mounier, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 670.

3. Mounier, *Sa Génération*, IV, pp. 671-672.

4. Mounier, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 411.

5. Mounier, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 633.

6. "Le concret, pour nous, c'est la présence en face au bout de la main, ou du regard, ou du silence, ou de la pudeur, présence écartée et pourant baignée avec moi dans un univers de présence à qui je donne mon accueil; l'être plus concret, la vie la plus enivrante pourraient bien être reçus non de la recherche de la possession la plus sauvage, mais dans un vaste et universel effort de renoncement." Emmanuel Mounier, *Révolution personaliste et communautaire. Oeuvres de Mounier: 1931-1939*, Tome I (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1961), p. 173. Hereafter cited as *Révolution*, I.

7. "En moi se nouent les chiffres entrelacés d'un destin pressant et d'une vocation qui est un défi jeté à toutes les forces du monde.

Mais cette vocation ne peut frayer son chemin que dans ce corps, cette famille, ce milieu, cette classe, cette patrie, cette époque. Emmanuel Mounier, "*Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme?* *Oeuvres de Mounier: 1944-1950*, Tome III (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1962), pp. 191-192. Hereafter cited as *Qu'est-ce que*, III. This work appears in translation with another set of Mounier's treatises, *La Petite Peur du XXe siècle*, in *Be Not Afraid*, trans. Cynthia Rowland with an Introduction by Leslie Paul (New York: Sheed and Ward, n.d.). The above quotation is on p. 127 of the English translation.

8. "If the person of the Christian is constituted by way of a singular Divine intention prolonged in an inexpressible dialogue of advances and responses made between a free will and the unfathomable course of Providence, then its gist will be by definition inaccessible, and its essence incapable of expression. This is what moral theology expresses by putting in the innermost being of each of us a 'secret of the heart' to which no one has access, neither man nor angel, but only God." Emmanuel Mounier, "Catholic Personalism Faces Our Times," *Race: Nation: Person* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1944), p. 331. Hereafter cited as "Catholic Personalism." This is the only work of Mounier that was originally written in English. The paper was presented as part of a symposium at Catholic University of America in 1939. The anonymity of the author was preserved for fear of political reprisals. The article appears in *Oeuvres de Mounier: 1931-1939*, I, under the title: *Personnalisme et Christianisme*, pp. 729-767.

9. "Le personnalisme n'apporte pas de 'solutions.' Il donne une méthode de penser et de vivre, et ceux qui les ont conduites à quelques résultats prient qu'on ne les apprenne point pour se féliciter d'un tel bonheur, mais qu'on aligne son effort sur le leur, et qu'on refasse la route avec ses difficultés propres, afin que le résultat soit pour chacun une véritable résultante." Emmanuel Mounier, *Manifeste au service du personnalisme. Oeuvres I*, p. 639. Hereafter cited as *Manifeste*, I. There is an English translation: *A Personalist Manifesto*, trans. Monks of St. John's Abbey (New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1938), p. 271.

10. In a letter to his friend, Jacques Lefrancq (25 août 1933), Mounier described some of the aspects of his childhood and youth that had affected his intellectual development: "De l'adage familial: 'Il est plus mûr que son âge,' on glissa insensiblement à: 'Gardons-lui sa merveilleuse enfance,' 'Il a bien le temps,' etc. '... Il n'est que trop porté à la méditation. Il faut lui ménager une vie active. De ce jour on tâcha affectueusement d'insinuer en moi la vocation

médicale. J'étais d'abord timide, timide et encore timide, ensuite plein de chaleurs adolescentes et spirituelles." *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 416.

11. "1924-1925, je tombe dans la physique, chimie, histoire naturelle. Désespoir, jusqu'aux goûts de suicide." *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 417.

12. "En mars, je commence à ne plus manger. Alors je vais à la première retraite fermée de ma vie et, ne pouvant le dire, écris chez moi ce qu'il en est. La retraite est lumineuse. J'y lis en lettres de feu la nécessité de bifurquer. Toute cette contrariété intérieure m'avait un peu brouillé le caractère. J'en sors souple comme un agneau. Chevalier est à Grenoble, moyen d'éviter les frais d'un séjour parisien on le voit, on décide." *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 417.

13. "Je passai un an (1926-27), pour mon diplôme, à lire Descartes, comme un homme à la campagne, et à peu près rien autre. *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 418.

14. Letter à Jean Guitton, 26 novembre 1926, and "Lettre à Francisque Gay, 8 février 1926," *Sa Génération*, IV, pp. 421, 420.

15. Emmanuel Mounier, "Un penseur Français: Jacques Chevalier," *La Vie Catholique*, avril 1926. Cf. Lettres à Francisque Gay, 8 février 1926, and 14 mars 1926, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 420.

16. During the war Chevalier became Minister of Information for the Vichy government. After the liberation he was tried as a collaborator and imprisoned. Mounier wrote a touching letter to him immediately after the trial, repudiating the "psychose d'Inquisition" of the Resistance, offering what honest comfort he could, and expressing his sense of regret that Chevalier had surrendered his prophetic role: "Maintenant que vous n'êtes plus *rien*, même pas un accusé, je retrouve, derrière tout ce qui nous a séparés, ce que *rien* ne brise, un lien noué une fois dans la fidélité. Je ne l'avais jamais oublié. Mais il y a des souvenirs qu'on ne peut rejoindre que dans l'Éternité, ou l'extrême misère... Mais puis-je ne pas avoir un regret? Cette ferveur que j'ai eue sous votre direction, vous n'y étiez pas étranger. Comment n'avez-vous pas gardé ce beau rôle d'éveilleur d'âmes, qui eût suffi à votre gloire, et à votre joie?" 13 mars 1946, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 804.

17. "Il encourageait mon vice: lisez peu et méditez profond... Je ne m'apercevais pas que Chevalier, en me mettant au régime

débilitant m'inoculait, sous raison de simplicité et de clarté, une autre forme de déformation scolaire . . . Je suivis pendant trois ans (1924-1927) tous les thèmes que je voulais de vie intérieure plus que de science philosophique" Lettre à Jacques Lefrancq, 25 août 1933, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 418.

18. Lettre à Madeleine Mounier (his older sister), 16 janvier 1928, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 431. Cf. the section describing Mounier's reaction to the Sorbonne and to Paris: "La Grande Ville indifférente," *Sa Génération*, IV, pp. 426-437.

19. "Toute jeune encore, notre amitié souriait à l'avenir, pour elle riche de promesses. Je sens de nouveau le vide de tout cela, et l'amertume, à vingt-deux ans, d'être sans ami." Lettre à Madeleine Mounier, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 431.

20. "Comme il est vrai que la souffrance nous ouvre les voies de Dieu. Malgré l'irréparable, ces journées comptent parmi les plus riches: à l'avance, on les repousserait; après, on ne voudrait pas ne pas les avoir vécues" 25 janvier 1928, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 431.

21. John of the Angels lived from 1536-1609. Probably Mounier's interest in the Spanish mystics was linked with the similar interests of Bergson and of Chevalier. Cf. *Entretiens II*, *Sa Génération*, IV, pp. 446, 453.

22. "On a l'assurance intime que l'on n'aura jamais à écraser en soi des résistances, à justifier des injustifiables, à faire passer des demi-vérités pour des articles de foi. Tu ne saurais croire la joie avec laquelle je rencontre pareil milieu." Lettre à Madeleine Mounier, 18 avril, 1929, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 444.

23. Jean Calbrette, a bitter critic of personalism, in his reactionary work on Mounier, provides this interesting note on Mme. Daniélou. "Was not this astonishing woman, wife of a radical minister, in some way the godmother of *Esprit*? She went from a solid religious foundation, nourished by the thought of P. de Grandmaison, to a surprising audacity. Her son, Jean, whom she at first had pushed toward the adventurous Company of St. Paul, is distinguished by the same opposition of tendencies. In him the left and the right are mingled. Her son Alain is engaged in a strange inversion. In India, in the Benares, he makes an open profession of Buddhism." *Mounier: le mauvais Esprit* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1957), p. 9.

24. Emmanuel Mounier wrote some thirty articles which appeared in the Catholic review *Aux Davidées*. Excerpts of two of these articles have been reprinted in the *Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier*, viz., "L'Étranger," and "L'Événement et nous." Mlle. Silve, in a brief introduction to these two articles, claims that a preliminary sketch of all his later work can be found in the articles Mounier wrote for *Aux Davidées*. When these are compared with his later works they do reveal a perduring element, especially in regard to history and the significance of events. *Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier*, #3, avril 1953, pp. 1-12. Hereafter cited as *Bulletin*.

25. Cf. *Entretiens II, Sa Génération*, IV, p. 442, 454. Cf. also *Lettre à Madeleine Mounier*, 4 mai 1929, p. 445.

26. Jean Lacroix has suggested that Mounier underwent three conversions: one when he turned from the study of medicine to the study of philosophy, in view of an apostolate; a second when he gave up the idea of an apostolate through teaching and relinquished an academic career to become an *éducateur* through the publication of *Esprit*; and a third which began in 1932 when he tried daily to establish an identity between his personalist thought and his actions. Jean Lacroix, "Un Témoin et un guide," *Emmanuel Mounier ou le combat du juste*, ed. Guy Ducros (Bordeaux: Freres du Monde, 1967), pp. 21-25.

27. *Infra*, p. 27 and nn. 85-89. Also Charles Péguy, *Note Conjointe* (21st ed; Gallimard, 1935), p. 25.

28. "J'ai vécu alors au moment où les vocations se forment de longs mois dans l'intimité de son oeuvre." Emmanuel Mounier, "Action temporelle des catholiques," *Bulletin*, #18, décembre 1961, p. 13. "Alors Péguy intervint. Ce fut pendant les vacances de Noël 1928-1929. . . . Il cristallisait toute la part extra-universitaire de ma vie, et au surplus donnait son souffle à l'Universitaire." Emmanuel Mounier, *Lettre à Jérôme Martinaggi*, 1^{er} avril 1941, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 452. Albert Béguin says that there was almost nothing in the maturing of Mounier up to this point that seemed to prepare him for the ways he was to follow. It was Péguy who "authorized" him. "Une Vie" (texts de liaisons), *Esprit*, décembre 1950, p. 964.

29. Marjorie Villiers, *Charles Péguy: A Study in Integrity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 67-68; p. 102.

30. "Vous vous souvenez de mes découvertes de Noël 1926. . . . Mais je le découvris bien plus encore quelques mois plus tard dans

la souffrance. A peine arrivé ici [à Paris], aux prises avec les premières solitudes, je perdais le meilleur de mes amis: une mort après une vie désolée comme des chemins d'usine sous la pluie. Ce fut le départ d'une grande crise d'angoisse. Péguy m'en sauva. Vous comprenez maintenant mon livre. Quelques officiels se demandent pourquoi 'j'ai perdu mon temps' à écrire ce chant d'un matin après les crépuscules." Lettre à Jérôme Martinaggi, 18 mai 1930, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 468.

31. Jean Onimus, "Bibliographie," *Incarnation: essai sur la pensée de Charles Péguy*. (Paris: Cahiers de l'Amitié Charles Péguy, 1952), p. 254.

32. Mounier, *Entretiens* II, 2 décembre 1929, and 6 avril 1930, *Sa Génération*, IV, pp. 454, 467. Lettre à Jérôme Martinaggi, 18 mai 1930. *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 469.

33. "I would venture to say that Emmanuel Mounier, like Péguy, was the *pedagogue* and *educator* of a generation. . . . Personalism: in the beginning a pedagogy concerning communal life linked to an awakening of the person." Paul Ricoeur, "Personalism," *History and Truth*, trans. Charles Kelbley (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), pp. 135-136. Cr. also Jean Lacroix, "Un Témoin et un Guide," *Le combat du juste*, pp. 22-24, where he describes Mounier's second conversion as turning away from the possibility of becoming a teacher or professor, in order to respond to the call of becoming an educator. "Jusqu'à sa mort, il a gardé, comme une marque en creux, l'horreur rétrospective de ce qu'il aurait pu devenir, de ce qu'il était en train de devenir—un professeur, un universitaire, ayant certes de l'influence sur les jeunes, mais faisant en même temps un 'carrière'," p. 23.

34. Quoted from *le Figaro* in Leslie Paul's Introduction to *Be Not Afraid*, pp. vii-viii.

35. "Oh! Je n'essaie pas de l'annexer. Je prétends moins encore le continuer. Il est plus grand que nous. Et puis on ne continue vraiment que ce qu'on a essayé de recréer." Emmanuel Mounier, "Action temporelle des catholiques," *Bulletin*, #18, décembre 1961, p. 13.

36. Mounier, *Entretiens* IV, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 504.

37. Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'Esprit," *Bulletin* #29, mars 1967, p. 10.

38. Mounier, "Christianisme et Communisme," *Feu le Chrétienté*, IV, p. 66.

39. Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'*Esprit*," *Bulletin* #29, p. 10.

40. Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'*Esprit*," *Bulletin* #29, p. 11.

41. Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'*Esprit*," *Bulletin* #29, p. 12. Mounier decried the "désordre établi," in the article: "Confession pour nous autres Chrétiens," *Esprit*, no. 6, mars 1933, pp. 873-896. It is reprinted in *Révolution*, I, under the title "Rupture entre l'ordre Chrétien et le désordre établi," pp. 371-406.

42. "Je crois que nous étions un des premiers mouvements où le problème de leurs rapports a été posé comme tel, c'est-à-dire non pas simplement dans un dialogue sur le problème religieux, mais dans une action temporelle commune qui n'entamait pas leur position religieuse, et qui cependant créait, entre eux, une véritable communauté. . . . Notre communauté était vraiment une communauté temporelle, portant sur le plan historique et humain, et qui faisait que ces mêmes positions, nous les engagions les uns et les autres avec un arrière-plan différent sans que nous sentions dissociés par la haine." Mounier, "Les cinq étapes," *Bulletin* #29, p. 13.

43. "Vous savez ce que dit Bergson de toute initiative: elle commence par un non vigoureux et ce non, ce refus n'est pas, malgré l'apparence, un pur refus. Je me rappelle qu'au début d'*Esprit* on nous a beaucoup reproché nos négations qui avaient la violence et le penchant de la jeunesse, évidemment, et nous sentions que ces reproches étaient injustes en quelque manière, parce que ces 'non' nous apparaissaient à nous comme éminemment positifs. C'était, si j'ose dire, des 'non' chargés d'amour, c'était des *non* à des situations existantes avec, en promesse, des germes qui allaient se développer, mais ne pouvaient encore être perçus sous leur forme positive." Mounier, "Les cinq étapes," *Bulletin* #29, p. 9.

44. "Primard avait bien raison, l'autre jour—pourquoi ai-je protesté?—quand il me disait que jusqu'ici *Esprit* c'était moi, et mon histoire personnelle." Entretiens VII, 13 mai 1934, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 548.

45. "Laissé à moi même, je passerais ma vie à faire d'*Esprit* un pur témoignage, je donnerais ma vie pour que ce témoignage ne cesse pas; mais organiser une tactique, des attaques, une révolution

en un mot, je ne vaud rien pour cela. . . . Je suis comme une force calme et sur place, rayonnant, non pas fait pour la conquête, mais pour la séduction, non pour l'attaque, mais pour la présence. Entretiens VIII, 5 juin 1934, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 551.

46. "Depuis que je connais Paulette et qu'il n'y a plus de secrets entre nous, cela même que je ne lui exprime point est comme libéré, ne se heurte plus à un mur d'absence qui le fasse refluer sur soi. Entretiens VIII, 20 juin 1935, *Sa Génération*, IV. p. 572.

47. "Cet esprit de décision en même temps que par un changement d'orientation philosophique, a été provoqué chez nous par les événements qui, depuis 1934, nous ont obligés au nom même de nos positions à nous engager, très souvent avec un coeur déchiré, car on ne peut qu'avoir un coeur déchiré quand on doit laisser en dehors de soi une partie de la vérité. Mais il fallait le faire parce que la situation historique l'exigeait." Mounier, "Les cinq étapes," *Bulletin* #29, p. 18.

48. "Considérée dans l'individu qu'elle anime, la *mystique* est hostilité aux contraintes, passion de liberté intérieure. . . . L'esprit mystique est une liberté transcendante qui toujours s'échappe vers le haut. Péguy n'aurait su que faire de la liberté hors de l'innocence. Etre libre n'avait d'autre intérêt pour lui que de rompre les entraves à une plus haute pureté. . . . Plus profondément qu'un sens inné, de la liberté, l'esprit mystique est le sens même du spirituel. . . . Il est proprement le sens de l'éternel."

"Une politique est le produit de décomposition d'une mystique. . . . 'ce qui était pour nous, pour nos pères, un instinct, une race, des pensées, est devenu pour eux [les politiques] des *propositions* . . . ce qui était pour nous organique est devenu pour eux logique.'" Mounier, *La Pensée de Charles Péguy*, *Oeuvres de Mounier* I, pp. 71-74, including the quotation from Charles Péguy, *Notre Jeunesse*, IV, 250 (II, 650).

49. "Nous devons chercher une certaine pureté des moyens, mais cette pureté ne doit pas être une pureté abstraite. Et là nous avons été amenés à modifier cette position par un développement d'ordre intérieure, par une sorte de tournant philosophique et, ensuite, par la pression des événements extérieurs. . . . Landsberg est venu à *Esprit* à ce moment. C'était une personnalité extrêmement puissante. Il était en élève de Max Scheler. Il a eu sur nous une énorme influence. Il nous a sauvés de ce danger du purisme. Certains d'entre vous se rappellent son étude sur l'engagement qui a paru dans *Esprit* et qui marqué ce tournant. Cette étude marquait magnifique-

ment comment, dans des circonstances historiques concrètes, où nous sommes toujours plongés, que nous le voulions ou non, nous avons un certain nombre de devoirs qui sont des devoirs de décision et d'engagement, et que poser les problèmes en dehors de ces situations historiques, en vertu d'une sorte de pureté idéale, c'est au fond s'évader de sa condition humaine. Tout engagement est impur. Les choses historiques sont toujours mêlées. . . . Nous avons acquis à ce moment-là le sens de cet engagement nécessaire même dans des positions impures: le devoir des hommes qui ont des intentions pures sera d'entrer dans l'impur, en tâchant de le purifier de l'intérieur, mais en ne s'évadant pas de cet impur sous le prétexte qu'il est impur." Mounier, "Les cinq étapes," *Bulletin*, #29, p. 17. Cf. Paul-Louis Landsberg, "Réflexions sur l'engagement personnel," *Esprit*, novembre 1937, pp. 179-197. Also Landsberg, "Le sens de l'action," *Esprit*, Octobre 1938, pp. 88-103.

50. "Voyez, la vocation politique est une vocation très précise, qui demande des *dons*, comme la peinture, comme la technique, etc. Le mal de notre temps est que tout le monde, par présomption, s'y croit apte, et, par scrupule de conscience, appelé." Mounier, Lettre à Guy Malengrau, 24 octobre 1936, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 599.

Jean Lacroix has pointed out that though many do not realize it Mounier's notion of engagement has "scarcely any political content." Mounier affirms this in the letter to Malengrau, explaining that to insist on political action as a requisite for engagement is to confuse it with action as such. Jean Lacroix, "Un Témoin et un guide," *Le combat du juste*, p. 22.

51. "Je ne puis qu'attendre que des vocations politiques sérieuses se soient spirituellement nourries d'*Esprit* et partent," *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 599.

52. R. W. Rauch Jr., *Politics and Belief in Modern France and the Christian Democratic Movement. 1932-1950*. (A Ph.D. dissertation exploring the effect which Mounier's thought and writings had on French politics, Columbia University. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, #64-11, 314,) p. 95. This manuscript was published in 1972: La Haye, Editions Martinus Nyjhoff.

53. Jean Calbrette, a reactionary critic of Mounier, shows that the editor of *Esprit* has infected with his personalism, politicians and theologians throughout France. Many of the religious periodicals in France reveal clearly the subversive influence of Mounier. For example: "A notre connaissance, jamais les Jesuites de *"Témoignage Chrétien"* ne se sont réclamés de Mounier. Ils ne l'ont

pas moins copié, tactique et programme. . . . *Témoignage Chrétien* s'est substitué à la hierarchie, comme de Gaulle s'est substitué au Maréchal Pétain." pp. 52-53. "Depuis Janvier 1954, les Jesuites publient une revue de spiritualité ignatienne, *Christus*. En octobre 1956, le P. Guillet y intitule treizé pages laborieuses *Mounier et son Dieu*, ce quit donne à penser que les révérends pères donnent aux militants de l'Action Catholique, dans les retraites et les récollections, une interprétation mouniérienne des deux Etendards et des Règles d'orthodoxie." p. 50. "Rien de plus clair. *Esprit* préconise, recommande et chauffe la collaboration rouge, en se flattant d'orienter le communisme une fois que celui-ci aura triomphé. *Esprit* n'existe en définitive que pour précipiter la descente de l'apocalypse selon Karl Marx, afin de la diriger." p. 35. "De même qu'un microbe généralisé dans le sang détermine une septicémie, ainsi s'est comporté le personnalisme. Notre infection se mesure au prestige que s'est attribué le préparateur de ce bouillon de germes." p. 43. Jean Calbrette, *Mounier, le mauvais esprit*. (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1957).

54. "Les cinq étapes d' 'Esprit'," *Bulletin* #29, p. 20.

55. In a letter to his parents after the suppression of *Esprit*, Mounier wrote: "What pure joy, not to be on the side of laxity—to be consecrated by an official paper the brother of all the innocent who suffer for their faith in concentration camps, of all those who can today hold their heads high." 25 août 1941, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 713.

56. "J'ai présenté cette Déclaration (que depuis longtemps nous projetions à *Esprit*) comme le premier objet de travail du centre d'études clandestin qui a remplacé *Esprit* après son interdiction, et qui fut le premier organisme fédératif de la Résistance en zone sud." Mounier, *Les Certitudes difficiles. Oeuvres de Mounier*, IV, p. 98.

57. This revised version, "Déclaration des droits des personnes et des communautés," was used by the commission on the constitution of 1945 as one of the bases for its work. Reprinted in *Les Certitudes difficiles*, IV, pp. 99-103.

58. Emmanuel Mounier, *Oeuvres de Mounier: Traité du caractère*, Tome II (Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1962). Hereafter cited as *Traité*, II. An abridged edition of this volume has been translated into English: *The Character of Man*, trans. Cynthia Rowland (London: Rockliff, 1956).

59. Cf. "Journal d'un acte fragile," (daily notes written during his hunger strike from June 19-30, 1942), *Esprit*, No. 18, décembre 1950, pp. 731-764. Reprinted in *Oeuvres de Mounier*, IV, pp. 745-767.

60. Cf. "Journal de Dieulefit," (the last of the unedited notes of Mounier), *Bulletin*, #7-8, 1955, pp. 1-39. Letters written during or pertaining to this time are printed in *Oeuvres de Mounier*, IV, pp. 769-791.

61. Leclerq was the maiden name of his wife, Paulette. Articles written during this period were signed Jean Leclerq.

62. Jean Lecroix has called *L'Affrontement Chrétien* Mounier's most beautiful book. It was first published as part of the collection "Les Cahiers du Rhône" (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1944). In English: *The Spoil of the Violent*, trans. Katherine Watson (London: Harvill Press, 1955). Presently available as a *Cross Currents* publication with a lengthy excerpt appended from *Feu le Chrétienté* entitled "Christian Faith and Civilization."

63. *Esprit* reappeared in December, 1944. Cf. Roy Peirce for an account of this time. Peirce, *Contemporary French Political Thought*. (London: Oxford Press, 1966), p. 45.

64. Émmanuel Mounier, "Suite française aux maladies infantiles des révolutions," *Esprit*, No. 1, Vol. 13, décembre 1944. Cf. also Mounier's letter to Chevalier, *supra*, n. 16.

65. After the community was established he no longer kept a personal notebook. Letters were for the most part replaced by conversations with his friends since they were close at hand. Cf. Lettre à Émile-Albert Nicklaus for his brief reflections on Châtenay. *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 798.

66. The "old" *Esprit* group included François Goguel, Paul Fraise, Henri Marrou, Jean Lacroix, and Bertrand d'Astorg. Joining these members after the war were Jean-Marie Domenach, Chris Marker, H. Bartoli, and Paul Ricoeur.

67. For a list of the radio broadcasts, see the bibliography in *Oeuvres de Mounier*, IV, pp. 867-872. Texts of some of these talks have been printed in the *Bulletins*. Cf. Nos. 9-10, 12, 15. Some of the conferences given during this time have been printed in the collection *La Petite Peur du XX^e siècle*, *Oeuvres*, III, pp. 341-425. This collection is included in *Be Not Afraid*, pp. 1-108.

68. "J'avais, en effet, forcé les quatre derniers mois avec le "Que sais-je?," la conférence des intellectuels catholiques, l'enquête Unesco, le numéro *École*, en plus du programme normal, et la fin juillet avait été anormalement chargée surtout du côté des six gros manuscrits qui me sont tombés dessus le crâne pour la collection." Lettre à Jean-Marie Domenach, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 816. Mounier's works during this time are collected in *Oeuvres de Mounier: 1944-1950*, Tome III.

69. "Il reste que c'est une des joies de l'automne que de reprendre périodiquement sa vie en main. D'autres renaissent au printemps. Moi, depuis mon enfance, je me sens renaître à l'automne." Lettre à Jean-Marie Domenach, 5 septembre 1949, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 816.

70. P. André Depierre, "Ce témoin perseverant de Dieu," *Esprit*, No. 174, décembre 1950, pp. 923-1060. The incident is recounted by Eugene Langdale, "Emmanuel Mounier," *Dublin Review*, Vol. 224, Summer, 1950, p. 100.

71. "... Je voudrais, avec ma femme, donner au moins un peu, et me préparer au jour où les événements peut-être nous pousseront à donner tout." Lettre à l'abbé Depierre, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 831.

72. "Je ne saurais discerner moi-même ce qu'elles lui ont apporté de ce qu'elles en ont reçu." Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 129.

73. "La signature isolée d'un auteur est toujours à quelque degré trompeuse: toute une partie de ma génération se tient à côté de la mienne." *Révolution*, I, p. 129.

74. Stanley Hoffman describes the "génération de Péguyisme" in his book: *In Search of France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 32-34.

75. *Supra*, p. 10 and note 34.

76. "L'originalité de Péguy sur Bergson, c'est qu'il a mené jusque sur la place publique un combat spirituel que Bergson, par une sorte de réserve universitaire et peut-être aussi en grand seigneur de la pensée, n'a livré qu'avec des théories d'état-major. Qu'il l'ait fait (quelques injustices réservées, inévitables) avec cette justesse de visée, traçant un trait si ferme et si lumineux de principe menacé aux responsables menaçants, constitue plus qu'un témoignage unique..." Emmanuel Mounier, "Péguy, médiateur de Bergson," *Bulletin*, #20, juillet 1963, p. 7. This article originally appeared in the volume:

Henri Bergson, ed. Albert Béguin and Pierre Thevanez (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1943), pp. 311-320.

77. "Je passe de longs moments, ces jours-ci, chez le "Maître" que j'aide à corriger ses épreuves de *Bergson* qu'il a reçues en cataractes, alors qu'elles devaient s'échelonner sur un mois." Lettre à Madeleine Mounier, novembre 1926, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 422.

78. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell (New York: Modern Library, 1911), pp. 25-27, 179-182.

79. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 196.

80. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 293.

81. Henri Bergson, *Creative Mind*, trans. M. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 109.

82. "Entre le changement pur qui ramènerait jamais un être au même état, et l'identité pure qui le maintiendrait absolument égal à lui-même, le rythme assure un certain retour, et par suite, une certaine stabilité dans le changement." Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 281. Eng., p. 58.

83. "Je suis décidément incapable de l'attitude objective de ces jeunes hommes qui se placent devant les problèmes comme devant une pièce d'anatomie, et devant leur carrière comme devant un mécanisme à monter méthodiquement jusqu'au point réglé." Lettre à Jacques Chevalier, 25 mai 1928, *Sa Génération*, IV, p. 433.

84. *Supra*, note 76.

85. "Bergson, au moment où l'avarice du monde de l'argent et du rationalisme sont près de dessécher les dernières postérités du Christ, c'est un peu pour Péguy le plus récent prophète du johannisme. Péguy est son capitaine, il mène en son nom les batailles temporelles. Premier adversaire: l'Histoire. Celle de la Sorbonne, qui passe avec ses fiches le long de l'événement au lieu de le remonter de dedans." Mounier, "Péguy, médiateur de Bergson," *Bulletin*, #20, p. 8.

86. "Le péché de la philosophie, pour Péguy comme pour Bergson, c'est le tout-fait. Il n'est pas une erreur logique, mais un relâchement spirituel, comme était pour Descartes la confusion ou pour Pascal l'indifférence religieuse. Quand il se donne une métaphysique, le déterminisme ou le mécanisme, alibi des "logiques raides" et d'un

monde de confection, il ne fait pas un acte de pensée, mais une opération de parti, semblable à ces motions de Congrès où la doctrine est invoquée avec ardeur pour couvrir des manquements, des lâchetés et des paresse." *Bulletin*, #20, p. 8.

87. "Bergson a touché l'avarice du monde moderne: l'avarice d'un monde qui recule devant la création, devant le danger d'être libre, le système de sécurité intellectuelle qui répond à l'immense désir bourgeois de sécurité temporelle." *Bulletin* #20, p. 7.

88. "C'est comme si on disait que les mathématiques de la droite sont plus de mathématiques que les mathématiques de la courbe." Péguy, cited by Mounier, "Péguy, médiateur de Bergson," *Bulletin* #20, pp. 4-5.

89. "Il est évident au contraire que ce sont les méthodes souples, les logiques souples, les morales souples, qui sont les plus sévères, étant les plus serrées. Une logique raide peut laisser échapper des replis de l'erreur. Une méthode raide peut laisser échapper de replis de l'ignorance. . . . C'est une logique souple, une méthode souple, une morale souple qui poursuit, qui atteint, qui dessine les sinuosités des fautes et des déficiences. . . . La raideur est essentiellement infidèle, et c'est la souplesse qui est fidèle." Charles Péguy, as cited by Emmanuel Mounier, *Bulletin*, #20, p. 5.

90. Emmanuel Mounier, *Révolution personnaliste et communautaire* (Paris: Éditions Montaigne, 1935). Reprinted in *Oeuvres*, I, pp. 129-409.

91. *Révolution*, I, pp. 186-194.

92. "Nous appelons révolution personnelle cette démarche qui naît à chaque instant d'une prise de mauvaise conscience révolutionnaire d'une révolte d'abord dirigée par chacun contre soi, sur sa propre participation ou sa propre complaisance ou désordre établi, sur l'écart qu'il tolère entre ce qu'il sert et ce qu'il dit servir—et qui s'épanouit au second temps en une conversion continuée de toute la personne solidaire, paroles, gestes, principes, dans l'unité d'un même engagement." *Révolution*, I, p. 328.

93. Eugene Langdale, "Emmanuel Mounier," *Dublin Review*, Vol. 224, Summer, 1950, p. 100. Emmanuel Mounier, *De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1936). Reprinted in *Oeuvres*, I, pp. 416-477. Hereafter cited as *De la propriété*, I.

94. Cf. the footnote appended to this article in *Oeuvres* I, p. 438. The editor there points out the similarity of Marcel's and Mounier's thoughts on *being* and *having*, noting also that Mounier's work appeared almost a year prior to Marcel's *Etre et Avoir*.

95. *Passim*, *Révolution*, I; *Introduction aux existentialismes*, *infra*, note 103; *Le Personnalisme*, *infra*, note 122. Mounier's reflections on freedom, on the body, and on fidelity are among those which reveal a kinship with Marcel.

96. *De la propriété*, I, pp. 432-438.

97. *De la propriété*, I, pp. 426-431.

98. "Personnalisme n'annonce donc pas la constitution d'une école, l'ouverture d'une chapelle, l'invention d'un système clos. Il témoigne d'une convergence de volontés, es se met à leur service, sans toucher à leur diversité, pour leur chercher les moyens de peser efficacement sur l'histoire." Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 483; Eng., p. 2.

99. "Nous pensons—et ici nous rapprocherions du marxisme—qu'une spiritualité incarnée, quand elle est menacée dans sa chair, a pour premier devoir de se libérer et de libérer les hommes d'une civilisation oppressive, au lieu de se réfugier dans des peurs, dans des regrets ou dans des exhortations." *Manifeste*, I, p. 486; Eng., p. 7.

100. *Manifeste*, I, p. 486; Eng., p. 8.

101. "Seuls un travail visant au-dessus de l'effort et de la production, une science visant au-dessus de l'utilité, un art visant au-dessus de l'agrément, finalement une vie personnelle dévouée par chacun à une réalité spirituelle qui l'emporte au-delà de soi-même sont capables de secouer le poids d'un passé mort et d'enfanter un ordre vraiment neuf. C'est pourquoi, au bord de l'action, nous songeons à prendre d'abord une mesure de l'homme et de la civilisation." *Manifeste*, I, p. 486; Eng., p. 7.

102. "Nous aurons notre manière à nous d'être 'marxistes': ce sera de retrouver l'universalité de l'Incarnation et de lui donner notre présence." *Révolution*, I, p. 411.

103. "La tradition théologique . . . catholique, a toujours montré sa préférence pour la thèse suivant laquelle le détour par la matière

est un chemin nécessaire pour accéder non seulement à la connaissance du monde, mais même à la vie intérieure et la connaissance de Dieu." Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 586; Eng., p. 213.

104. "Notre civilisation défaille encore de l'anémie idéaliste, et la voici déjà de toutes parts menacée par l'aliénation symétrique. On veut guérir le rêve par la solidarité des choses, mais l'homme qui se dissout dans ses rêves quand il déserte la familiarité des choses est envahi au milieu des choses par de nouvelles puissances de sommeil. Les matérialistes n'oublient qu'une chose, l'ambivalence de la vie matérielle." Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 212; Eng., p. 154.

105. Emmanuel Mounier, "Les cinq étapes," *Bulletin* #29, mars 1967, p. 22.

106. *Supra*, note 58.

107. Cf. *Traité*, II, p. 752, note 10.

108. "L'élan personnel utilise un très riche assortiment de mécanismes, mais il appartient précisément au caractérologue de déterminer en quoi il est personnel, c'est-à-dire dépasse et domine les mécanismes." *Traité*, II, p. 43.

109. *Supra*, note 62.

110. *L'Affrontement chrétien* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1945). Reprinted in *Oeuvres*, III, pp. 14-66.

111. *L'Affrontement chrétien* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1945). Reprinted in *Oeuvres*, III, p. 49; Eng. p. 36.

112. *Introduction aux existentialismes* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1946). Reprinted in *Oeuvres*, III, pp. 69-175.

113. *Liberté sous conditions* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1946). This collection contains the following treatises: *De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine*. Reprinted in *Oeuvres* I, pp. 419-471. *Anarchie et Personnalisme*. Reprinted in *Oeuvres* I, pp. 653-716. *Personnalisme et Christianisme*. Reprinted in *Oeuvres* I, pp. 729-767.

114. *Supra*, note 8.

115. *La Petite Peur du XX^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1948). Reprinted in *Oeuvres*, III, pp. 341-425. Hereafter cited as *La Petite Peur*, III. *Supra*, note 7. Eng., pp. 3-108.

116. The complementarity of Mounier's Personalism to Teilhard's cosmic vision of life and of Christianity has been discussed in André Ligneul's concise book: *Teilhard and Personalism*, trans., P. Pligny and M. Merlach (New York: Paulist Press, 1968). An account of Mounier's association with Teilhard also appears in an epilogue to Madeleine Barthélemy-Madaule's *La Personne et le drame humain chez Teilhard de Chardin* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), pp. 302-326. Cf. also "Trois Lettres de Teilhard de Chardin à Mounier," *Bulletin* #27, janvier 1966, pp. 29-32. Mounier refers to Teilhard as a "great anthropologist" whose suggestions, though little known, were "highly significant." This was as early as 1939, when "Catholic Personalism" was prepared for publication. Mounier apparently had access to some of Teilhard's unpublished manuscripts. Cf. "Catholic Personalism," *Race: Nation: Person*, p. 374. *Oeuvres*, I, p. 910, note 37.

P. de Lubac was, with P. Daniélou one of the editors of the theological collection, *Sources chrétiennes*. This was part of the movement towards historic theology. Cf. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, pp. 681-683. This movement helped to show the "essential lines of Christianity with history, so essential that the notion even of a history of man and of the world seem to be largely the issue of revelation." p. 683.

P. de Lubac was also a staunch friend of Mounier. While Mounier was still in a hospital bed, after his hunger strike, he wrote to de Lubac: "Vous, et deux ou trois autour de vous, êtes mon lien secret avec mon Église. De mon petit lit de l'hôpital d'Aubenas je veux vous envoyer un signe, rétablir ce lien. Deux prêtres, dûment chapitrés par mon policier-chef, m'ont refusé les sacrements. . . . Je voulais que vous le sachiez et priez pour moi." Lettre à P. de Lubac, 1^{er} juillet 1942, *Sa Génération*, I, p. 754.

117. *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard (New York: Mentor, 1946).

118. *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 402-403; Eng. pp. 79-80.

119. *Supra*, note 7.

120. "C'est ainsi que pour insérer le personnalisme dans le drame historique de ce temps, il ne suffit pas de dire: personne, communauté, homme total, etc. Il faut dire aussi: fin de la bourgeoisie occidentale, avènement des structures socialistes, fonctions initiatrice du prolétariat, et pousser plus précisément encore, année par année, l'analyse des forces et des possibilités." *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 238; Eng., p. 186.

121. Emmanuel Mounier, *Le Personnalisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949). Reprinted in *Oeuvres*, III, pp. 427-525. English translation: *Personalism*, trans. Philip Mairet (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952).

122. Francis Jeanson insists that Mounier was not a philosopher and that he did not intend to be one. Cf. "Une pensée combattante," *Esprit*, #174, décembre 1950, p. 856. In the same issue of *Esprit* (a memorial volume in honor of Mounier) Paul Ricoeur wrote that Mounier moved gradually from the position of being an "éducateur" to that of being a philosopher. Only in his later works was Mounier concerned with questions properly philosophical and with metaphysical analyses, viz., in his *Introduction aux existentialismes*, *Traité du caractère*, and *Le Personnalisme*. Cf. Paul Ricoeur, "Une Philosophie personnaliste," *Esprit*, #174, décembre 1950, pp. 860-887. This article also appears in Ricoeur's book *History and Truth*, trans., Charles Kelbley (Evanston: Northwestern U. Press, 1965). In his last work, however, Mounier made a point of claiming that personalism is a philosophy: "Le personnalisme est une philosophie, il n'est pas seulement une attitude. Il est une philosophie, il n'est pas un système. . . . Il ne fuit pas la systématisation. . . . Parce qu'il précise des structures, le personnalisme est une philosophie, et non seulement une attitude." *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 429; Eng., pp. vii-viii.

123. "Mais son affirmation centrale étant l'existence de personnes libres et créatrices, il introduit au coeur de ces structures un principe d'imprévisibilité qui disloque toute volonté de systématisation définitive." *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 429-430.

124. For the Christian the central act of life cannot be to construct, Mounier says. It must be to grasp and grapple with what is given or presented; it must be to discover and understand. One must give himself over to reality if he wishes to create: "L'acte essentiel de la vie de l'esprit pour le chrétien ne peut être de construire, il est de comprendre, c'est-à-dire de reconnaître un existant, de l'affronter et de l'accueillir dans un combat à double visage, d'espérer en lui pour le connaître mieux, de dialoguer avec lui, de se donner à lui dans le sacrifice et dans la joie." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 594. In an earlier section of this same work, Mounier points out that knowing and understanding are creative acts. To understand or to know is to become. The operation of knowing, for the Thomist, blossoms into being, not simply into thought: "Que 'la raison est non dans la conscience, mais dans l'être'* c'est l'affirmation centrale de toute philosophie chrétienne. L'opération de con-

naissance, pour le thomiste débouche non pas sur de la pensée, mais sur de l'être mieux encore, elle est elle-même une manière d'être, de devenir, de naître avec—de co-naître. (*Marx, *Idéologie allemande*.) Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 587.

125. "Il n'est pas un irrationalisme, il est un nouveau rationalisme, plus exigeant que le rationalisme qu'il combat, et c'est ce rationalisme prétendu qui durcit, sclérose, et finalement blesse à mort l'intelligence: 'Le bergsonisme ne consiste pas à s'interdire les opérations de la pensée. Il consiste à les modeler constamment sur la réalité dont il s'agit chaque fois.'" Emmanuel Mounier, "Péguy, médiateur de Bergson," *Bulletin*, #20, p. 5. In his *Traité du caractère* Mounier describes the person as having a flexible structure, one that like music, can only be elaborated in time. This is the sort of structure which pervades all of his personalism. *Traité*, p. 51; Eng. p. 8.

126. "The most immediate requisite of a personal life, one which concerns the unbeliever as well as the believer . . . is that of committing ourselves." "Catholic Personalism," p. 333. Cf. *Traité*, II, p. 673.

127. "L'acte d'amour est la plus forte certitude de l'homme, le cogito existentiel irréfutable: J'aime, donc l'être est, et la vie vaut (la peine d'être vécue). Il ne me confirme pas seulement par le mouvement dans lequel je le pose, mais par l'être qui m'y donne autrui." *Le Personnalisme*, p. 455; Eng. p. 23.

128. W. Stern, *Die Intelligenz der Kinder und der Jugendlichen*, as cited by Emmanuel Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 673; Eng. p. 263.

129. "Personnalisme n'annonce donc pas la constitution d'une école, l'ouverture d'une chapelle, l'invention d'un système clos. Il témoigne d'une convergence de volontés, es se met à leur service sans toucher à leur diversité. . . ." *Manifeste*, I, p. 483; Eng. p. 2.

130. "Elle est d'abord une réponse métaphysique à un appel métaphysique, une aventure de l'ordre de l'éternel. . . il n'y a de civilisation et de culture humaines que métaphysiquement orientées." *Manifeste*, I, p. 486; Eng. pp. 6-7.

131. *Qu'est-ce que*, I, 18; Eng. p. 114.

132. "Si la personne est dès l'origine mouvement vers autrui, 'être-vers', sous un autre aspect elle nous apparaît caractérisée, en opposition aux choses, par le battement d'une vie secrète où elle semble incessamment distiller sa richesse." *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 463; Eng., p. 33. Cf. also. "Catholic Personalism," p. 376.

133. Pierre-Aimé Touchard, "Dernier Dialogue," *Esprit*, No. 174 décembre, 1950, p. 781; Paul Fraisse, "Sa Puissance d'accueil," *Esprit*, No. 174 décembre, 1950, pp. 792-794; Francis Jeanson, "Une Pensée combattante," *Esprit*, No. 174 décembre, 1950, p. 856.

134. "Je crois que c'est le défaut de nos éducations chrétiennes que de nous orienter beaucoup trop vers le scrupule et pas assez vers la décision. L'affinement même de ce débat intérieur en oui ou en non fait que nous y perdons le sens même de ce qui est essentiel, qui est le oui." Mounier, "Les cinq étapes," *Bulletin* #29, p. 17.

135. "Le premier temps du dialogue est celui de l'opposition. C'est dans l'opposition que la pensée prend conscience de ses limites et de ses aspirations. Nous l'avons rencontrée à chaque crise de croissance de la personnalité. . . . Toute grande découverte de pensée, dit Bergson, commence par un 'non'. Malgré l'apparence, ce 'non' dirige déjà les affirmations qui en lèveront comme la plante du germe: il faut n'avoir jamais expérimenté la dialectique de la découverte pour reprocher à des garçons de vingt ans le caractère 'négatif' de leurs premières prises de conscience." *Traité*, II, p. 661; Eng., p. 252.

136. The three dangers of the dialectic are enumerated in *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 492; Eng., p. 75.

137. "L'enthousiasme peut tout recouvrir. . . . L'enthousiasme a du prestige. Il donne aux agitations les plus futiles du ton, de l'ampleur, de la force." *Manifeste*, I, p. 638; Eng., pp. 269-270.

138. Leslie Paul, "Foreword," to *Be Not Afraid*, p. 11.

139. *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 495; Eng., p. 79. Francis Jeanson points to the conflict in Mounier's conceptualizations of history: "je ne pense pas qu'aucun artifice, aucune subtilité, puissent faire qu'il n'y ait pas eu conflit, et un conflit radical, entre le Mounier que viennent d'évoquer ces quelques citations, et cet autre Mounier —quit tenait le sens de l'histoire (sa 'direction' et sa 'signification') pour révélé dans le événements historiques eux-mêmes," Francis Jeanson, "Une Pensée Combattante," *Esprit*, No. 174, décembre, 1950. p. 856.

140. "Affirmer qu'il y a une histoire c'est affirmer que l'ensemble des événements qui concernent l'homme, ou peut-être même l'ensemble homme-nature, n'est pas un pur chaos, une 'histoire de fous' mais révèle une continuité et, dans la double acception du mot, un

sens: direction et une signification." Emmanuel Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, Oeuvres III, p. 596.

141. "C'est l'événement qui par violence nous pénètre et nous emporte et nous jette transfigurés là où nous ne savions pas aller quand nous composions des chemins. La révélation de l'univers, ici encore, se termine en un don." *Révolution* I, p. 172.

142. "L'histoire ne peut être qu'une co-crédation des hommes libres, et ses structures ou ses conditionnements, la liberté doit les reprendre en main." *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 495; Eng., 79.

143. "Catholic Personalism," p. 339.

144. "Seule une conscience de la totalité achevée de l'histoire pourrait donner le sens de chacun des événements de l'histoire." *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 186; Eng. p. 119.

145. "La technique ne rompt avec la vie que sous la direction de l'esprit humain, pour faire passer notre condition d'une immanence esclave dans une nature inhumaine, proche de l'animalité, à la maîtrise réfléchie d'une nature humanisée." *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 378; Eng., p. 49.

146. *Qu'est-ce que*, p. 243; Eng. p. 194.

147. "L'absolu humain c'est la totalité de l'histoire de l'homme. Il ne serait objet de connaissance exhaustive que pour un jugement dernier, une conscience capable d'embrasser cette totalité à la fois dans sa signification globale et dans son cheminement libre. C'est dire qu'un point de vue historiquement situé, incertain sur le passé et ignorant de l'avenir, qui est celui de tout observateur humain, jamais ne pourra se proposer comme une définition adéquate de la nature de l'homme." *Qu'est-ce que*? III, p. 199; Eng. 137.

148. "Encore les contradictions du caractère offrent-elles à l'observation, sinon toujours une explication, du moins un minimum de netteté dans le dessin." *Traité*, II, p. 64; Eng., p. 19.

CHAPTER 2

1. Articles in which Mounier summarizes the development that has occurred in man's understanding of history are: "L'Histoire chrétien," which was first published under the title "L'Histoire, idole ou réalité," *Civitas*, No. 10, juin, 1949, pp. 584-593, then reprinted in *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, pp. 595-610; and "Le Christianisme et la

progrès," which was first presented at the International Conference in Geneva, September 1-13, 1947, and which is part of the collection *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 391-425; Eng. pp. 65-108.

2. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 596.

3. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 596, and *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 380. Eng. p. 51. In the latter work Mounier also speaks about the development of the individual as a paradigm for the development of humanity: "Humanity is becoming adolescent. Until quite recently man could treat the world as part of his family circle, taking it much as it came and only defending himself against any too intolerable encroachments. Today he finds himself called upon to become the demiurge both of the world and his own condition."

4. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 596.

5. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 398; Eng. p. 74.

6. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 398; Eng. p. 74.

7. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 72.

8. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 72.

9. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 397; Eng. p. 72.

10. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 397; Eng. p. 73. *Infra*, n. 13.

11. Ludwig Edelstein, in his book, *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), contends that the Greeks did have a notion of history as progressive. "Progress meant enlightenment more than material progress. . . . It cannot have been the opinion of the majority that the gods revealed everything to men at the beginning and that the happiest times were behind them." p. 45.

12. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 72.

13. "On croit parfois que le côté artésien de l'événements, sa nouveauté jaillissante, est contradictoire à l'idée d'une signification qui se déroule. Les Grecs témoignent du contraire: ensemble et d'un même mouvement, ils nient l'existence d'une unité de l'histoire et gémissent sur le malheur d'un monde où rien n'est jamais vraiment nouveau." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 596.

14. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 397; Eng. p. 73. Jean Guittou, one of Mounier's sources on the development of the meanings of time and of history makes a similar assertion when he states that "the real did not work in the temporal reality as a ferment which could develop it. The real was behind the temporal and to reach it one had to flee from time." It was not time, but escape from it that offered one the real. *Le Temps et l'éternité chez Platon et S. Augustin*, (2nd ed.; Paris: Aubier, 1956).

15. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 397; Eng. p. 73.

16. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 398; Eng. p. 74.

17. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 398; Eng. p. 74.

18. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 397; Eng. p. 73.

19. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 397; Eng. p. 73.

20. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 596.

21. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 398; Eng. p. 74.

22. "Les Grecs se soucient des choses humaines, mais ne les organisent pas dans le temps." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 398; Eng. pp. 74-75. In a review of John Gunnell's book *Political Philosophy and Time*, J. Pocock relates that the Greeks sought to reconstitute and to prolong their social identity in space. For them the *polis* was the manifestation of their enduring unity, while for the Hebrews it was time that would provide meaning and unity. The Jews transcended themselves in time; the Greeks in space: "The *polis* formed a structure of actualized values in which the individual life could rise above itself. If the *polis* failed to endure through time, men's lives fell back into the meaninglessness of the temporal." J.G.A. Pocock, "Review Essay: *Political Philosophy and Time* by John G. Gunnell (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1968)," *History and Theory*, Vol. VIII, 2 (1969), pp. 296-297.

23. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 399; Eng. p. 75.

24. "Dans toute l'antiquité à cette époque des religions mondiales qui marque le premier millénaire avant Jésus-Christ un seul peuple, une seule religion introduit avec rigueur et insistance l'idée que le monde a une histoire une et universelle, c'est la religion et le peuple, juif. C'est en même temps les seuls qui professent un monothéisme

absolu: il est impossible de ne pas voir le lien de l'une à l'autre profession." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 398; Eng. p. 74.

25. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 375; Eng. p. 45.

26. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 343; Eng. p. 6.

27. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 343; Eng. p. 6.

28. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 346; Eng. p. 9.

29. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 406; Eng. p. 84.

30. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 600.

31. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 400-401; Eng. pp. 77-78. Mounier's theological references to the collective destiny of man and his collection of pertinent texts from the Fathers, come in great part from P. de Lubac's classic work on the corporate destiny of man, viz., *Catholicism*, trans. L. Sheppard, (New York: Longmans, Green, 1950). This work provides a wealth of texts from the patristic period which had, prior to its publication, not appeared in any modern language.

32. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 599.

33. "D'une part l'histoire surnaturelle de l'humanité ne peut être décrite comme le déroulement d'un arrêté divin immuable et unilatéral dont l'homme n'aurait plus qu'à assumer l'exécution: la Rédemption deviendrait une sorte d'opération administrative dont nous serions les fonctionnaires, le rapport de l'humanité à son Dieu serait pensé, comme on dit aujourd'hui, en termes d'aliénation." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 599.

34. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 71.

35. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 71.

36. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 71.

37. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 71.

38. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 71.

39. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 396; Eng. p. 71. Mounier

does not list here nor in his similar discussion in *Feu la Chrétienté* the names of philosophers. He mentions only in a general way the Skeptics and the Existentialists pointing to Merleau-Ponty as an exception among the latter group. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 597.

40. "Il y a une autre façon de nier l'histoire que de la figer en un système immobile. C'est de n'accepter aucune continuité et aucune signification dans le monde pas plus horizontale que verticale, pas plus logique que temporelle. L'univers est alors accepté comme une absurdité incohérente, un grouillement informe d'événements et de rapports, dont chacun suit sa course absolument solitaire et ne rencontre les autres que par accident. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 597.

41. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, p. 597. Henri Marrou, one of Mounier's colleagues, makes a similar complaint of the decline that occurred with Neo-Hegelianism and Marxism: "When the meaning of history began to be philosophized instead of theologized, it was taken from the realm of uniqueness (Good News) and rationalized . . . giving priority to the concept of significance." *L'Ambivalence du temps de l'histoire chez Saint Augustin* (Montreal: l'Institut d'Etudes médiévales Albert-le-Grand de l'Université de Montréal, 1950), p. 7.

42. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 600; also *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 391-392; Eng. p. 66.

43. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 601.

44. Here Mounier points out that the role given by Marx to the proletariat in the modern world is similar to one that Scripture attributes to the Jewish people up to the diaspora. "A group of people is charged with the consciousness of all for all." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 599.

45. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 602.

46. Aristotle, *Physics*, Bk. II, c. 1, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), pp. 236-238.

47. Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalum*, Bk. I, c. 5, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), pp. 656-657.

48. Karl Lowith writes that "the Greeks were deeply impressed by the eternal order and beauty of the visible world, but no Greek thinker would ever think of connecting this well ordered eternal cosmos with the transitory *pragmata* of human histories in a 'world history'." *Nature, History and Existentialism* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 139.

49. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, 198-199; Eng. p. 137.

50. Mounier, "Catholic Personalism," pp. 354, 368-69.

51. Mounier, "Catholic Personalism," p. 358.

52. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 398; Eng. p. 74.

53. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 77.

54. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 77.

55. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 378-379; Eng. pp. 49-50.

56. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 416; Eng. p. 97.

57. Mounier insists that within the Catholic and Orthodox traditions of Christianity there has been an adamant refusal to admit that sin effected an intrinsic corruption of human nature: "Du moins pour les deux traditions catholique et orientale, les sources de la nature n'ont pas été souillées, par le péché originel, ses puissances n'en sont que gravement blessées. Toute l'activité naturelle reste bonne, bien qu'entravée par ses blessures, et elle est appelée à se transfigurer dans l'oeuvre surnaturelle." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 409; Eng. p. 88.

58. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 77.

59. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 399; Eng. p. 75.

60. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 77.

61. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 487; Eng. p. 9.

62. "Telle est la perspective première de toute la pensée patristique: il y a une unité naturelle du genre humain (l'expression de *genus humanum* apparaît chez les Pères) renforcée par son unité mystique de vocation, dans le Corps du Christ: et cette seconde

unité n'est pas de figure, ou simplement morale; c'est une unité physique, comme on disait au moyen âge. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 77.

63. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 199; Eng. p. 137.

64. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 243; Eng. p. 194. Also *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 353-354; Eng. pp. 18-19.

65. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 460, 495; Eng. pp. 30, 79. "Des polémiques grossières ont essayé de rattacher le sartrisme au nazisme. Nous ne voudrions pas donner l'ombre d'une complicité à ces procès de tendance qui brouillent le dialogue au lieu de l'éclaircir. Mais il apparaît à l'esprit le moins prévenu que si la nature humaine est tout entière et sans prédisposition, devant nous, résultante et non pas directrice, personne au monde n'a autorité de condamner un homme ou une collectivité qui, dans l'énergie de la passion, pousseraient le destin de l'homme à quelque forme exaltante d'inhumanité. Il est vrai que, s'il existe quelque chose comme une nature humaine, elle ne peut être approximativement énoncée que par l'ensemble de l'histoire de l'homme, si l'on admet que l'histoire ait un sens qui n'est pas pré-nécessité; toute définition que l'on donne de cette nature en cours de route risque d'être faussée par un préjugé historique radical. Mais si rien en l'homme ne dépasse l'histoire cette histoire fût-elle l'histoire de sa liberté, il est livré sans jugement à l'histoire. Le sens de l'histoire, en 1940, pour l'Europe, c'était la servitude. La liberté du S.S., à ses propres yeux, c'était de créer Dachau. Si redoutables que l'on estime l'aveuglement et la paresse des pseudo-essences, il nous faut un mur contre de telles aberrations et ce ne peut être qu'une certaine idée de l'homme révélée dans l'histoire, mais transcendante à l'histoire." Mounier, *Existentialismes*, III, pp. 155-156; Eng. p. 106.

66. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 243; Eng. p. 194.

67. Mounier, "Catholic Personalism," p. 358.

68. See Gerard Smith, S.J., "The Natural End of Man," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University) pp. 47-61, for an interesting discussion of the induction by St. Thomas Aquinas of Aristotelian natures into the Christian Universe.

69. "Peut-on parler d'une histoire des mondes, d'une histoire naturelle? Comment le ferait-on, s'il n'y a aucune conscience pour

la lire? Nous voilà donc dès le départ rejetés au problème d'une conscience universelle antérieure à la naissance des consciences humaines, ou bien à concevoir l'idée proprement impensable d'une existence qui se déroulerait, et se déroulerait dans un ordre significatif, en l'absence de toute conscience." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 598.

70. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 577. Speaking of history as a record of events, Mounier agrees with Péguy that history is equivocal and inexhaustible. No historian can ever present all the facts. Consciously or unconsciously he fabricates history; he is never able to convey the whole of it.

71. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 402; Eng. p. 79. Though Mounier refers to "History in itself" and spells it with a capital H here, he rarely follows this form. In his *Existentialismes*, p. 125, he complains that Kierkegaard, in opposing *Existence* to *History*, descends to arguing on the basis of capital letters: "When you start arguing on the basis of capital letters and what they signify, well there is scarcely any more to say on the subject." (Eng. p. 7.) However for the sake of clarity, and since history is used in so many different senses in Mounier's writings, I shall, as this work develops, begin to use a capital H to signify universal History and to distinguish it from history as a record of the past or from the personal histories of individuals.

72. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, pp. 210-211; Eng. p. 151.

73. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, pp. 210-211; Eng. p. 151.

74. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 402; Eng. p. 79.

75. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 579.

76. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III pp. 577-578.

77. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 243; Eng. p. 194.

78. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 395; Eng. p. 70.

79. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 404; Eng. p. 82.

80. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 404-405; Eng. pp. 82-83.

81. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 405; Eng. p. 83.

82. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 404; Eng. p. 81.

83. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 405; Eng. p. 83. Mounier acknowledges that he is echoing Péguy here.

84. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 405; Eng. p. 83.

85. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 405; Eng. p. 83.

86. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 210; Eng. p. 151.

87. "Cette perspective chrétienne, que parfois du côté de Barth l'on définit comme un pessimisme actif, j'ai préféré, pour exprimer la même paradoxale antinomie qui réside en son coeur, la nommer un optimisme tragique. Si pour elle l'histoire monte en fin de compte, elle ne monte pas par des chemins simples." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 411; Eng. p. 91.

88. Cf. J. Guitton, *Le Temps et l'éternité chez Platon et St. Augustin* for a more comprehensive etymology of the word history, pp. 357 ff.

89. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 399; Eng. p. 75.

90. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 399; Eng. p. 75.

CHAPTER 3

1. Emmanuel Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 545. Eng., p. 103.

2. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 495. Eng., p. 80.

3. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 454. Eng., p. 107.

4. Cf. chapter 2, note 68.

5. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 495. Eng., p. 79.

6. "L'émergence de l'univers personnel n'arrête pas l'histoire de la nature, elle l'engage dans l'histoire de l'homme sans l'y plier entièrement." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 444. Eng., p. 8.

7. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 432; Eng., p. xix.

8. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 432; Eng., p. xix.
9. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 448; Eng., p. 13.
10. "L'absolu humain, c'est la totalité de l'histoire de l'homme. Il ne serait objet de connaissance exhaustive que pour un jugement dernier, une conscience capable d'embrasser cette totalité à la fois dans sa signification globale et dans son cheminement libre." Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, 199; Eng. p. 137.
11. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 431; Eng. p. x.
12. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 432; Eng. p. xi.
13. Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 673. Eng. p. 263. Mounier discusses the acceptance of the non-neutrality of the intellect by virtually all Existentialists in his *Introduction aux existentialismes*, III, p. 86. His agreement is indicated in *Qu'est-ce que*, III, pp. 195-196, 209. Cf. also *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 592, where he writes: "L'homme qui connaît n'y est plus une conscience pure et apersonnelle, retranchée de l'homme qui agit et qui vit. Il pense avec son corps, avec ses mains, avec son pays, avec son temps, bien que tout l'effort de sa pensée soit de pénétrer d'éternité, sans jamais pouvoir l'abandonner, sa situation concrète. Il ne pense pas à partir d'idées détachées, de signes isolés, mais d'expériences pénétrantes portant la charge de toute sa vie personnelle, et élargissant de l'une à autre les horizons d'universalité dont la vie de l'esprit, ensuite, purifiera la ligne. La connaissance la plus authentique n'est pas la plus 'objective', . . ."
14. Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 67; Eng. p. 24.
15. "En ce sens, on peut dire avec Marx qu' 'un être qui n'est pas objectif n'est pas un être', à condition d'ajouter sur le champ qu'à un être qui ne serait qu'objectif manquerait cet achèvement de l'être: la vie personnelle." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 447; Eng. p. 11.
16. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 431; Eng. p. x.
17. "Nous ne la rejetons pas pour autant dans l'indicible. Une expérience riche plongeant dans le monde s'exprime par une création incessant de situations, de règles et d'institutions." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 431.

18. *Traité*, II, p. 69; Eng. p. 24.

19. "Elle [la liberté] n'est pas l'être de la personne, mais la manière dont la personne est tout ce qu'elle est, et l'est plus pleinement que par nécessité." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 484.

20. "La liberté a d'innombrables amis. Les libéraux s'en font les champions attitrés. Mais le marxistes, auxquels ils la disputent, prétendent préparer contre eux le vrai « règne de la liberté » derrière son illusion. Existentialistes et chrétiens la placent aussi au coeur de leurs perspectives, pas la même, ni la même que les deux autres. Pourquoi tant de confusion? C'est que chaque fois qu'on l'isole de la structure totale de la personne, on déporte la liberté vers quelque aberration." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 477; Eng. p. 54.

21. "L'autre est celle que nous menons à l'indéterminisme physique. On a fait grand cas de cette nouvelle perspective de la physique moderne, on a voulu la contraindre à 'prouver la liberté.' C'était faire contresens sur la liberté." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 477; Eng. p. 55.

22. Mounier, *Les Certitudes difficiles*, IV, p. 74.

23. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 478; Eng. p. 56.

24. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 478; Eng. p. 56.

25. "The existentialist does not think that man is going to help himself by finding in the world some omen by which to orient himself. Because he thinks that man will interpret the omen to suit himself. Therefore, he thinks that man, with no support and no aid, is condemned every moment to invent man." Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and the Human Emotions* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957) p. 23.

26. "Pour Sartre, l'être humain est investi par un être menaçant, visqueux, stupide, et il n'existe que dans la parade qui l'arrache à son engluement. Toutes ces pensées ont donné de remarquables descriptions de la force de rupture concentrée dans la personne. Mais ayant fait le vide dans le monde qui l'environne, elles n'y peuvent plus mettre que la terreur." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 472; Eng. p. 48.

27. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 479; Eng. p. 57.

28. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 472, 484; Eng. pp. 49, 64.

29. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 484; Eng. p. 64.

30. If the person is totally inventive and entirely new at every instant, the continuity necessary for personal history seems to be lacking too. That is, not only is the person isolated from other persons, he is also isolated from his own past. Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Essays in Existentialism*, Edited by Wade Baskin (New York: Citadel, 1967) p. 118. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 480; Eng. p. 58.

31. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 482; Eng. p. 61.

32. Mounier, *La Personnalisme*, III, p. 484; Eng. p. 64.

33. "Le mouvement de liberté est aussi détente, perméabilisation, mise en disponibilité. Il n'est pas seulement rupture et conquête, il est aussi et finalement adhésion. L'homme libre est un homme que le monde interroge, et qui répond: c'est l'homme *responsable*. La liberté en cette fin, n'isole pas, elle unit, elle ne fonde pas l'anarchie, elle est, au sens originel de ces mots, religion, dévotion." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 484; Eng. p. 64.

34. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 212.

35. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and the Human Emotions*, trans. B. Frechtman and Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), pp. 14-15. Mounier acknowledges the above problem in several places. Cf. *La Petite Peur*, III pp. 406, 420-421; Eng. pp. 84, 100-101.

36. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 209. Eng. p. 150.

37. *Manifeste*, I, p. 527; Eng. p. 74.

38. "S'il est une affirmation commune à *toutes* les philosophies personnalistes dont nous réclamons, des philosophies chrétiennes comme celles de Kierkegaard, de Scheler, de Gabriel Marcel, de Berdiaeff, aux pensées agnostiques comme celle de Jaspers, c'est que la démarche essentielle d'un monde de personnes n'est pas la perception isolée de soi (*cogito*) ni le souci de soi égocentrique, mais la communication des consciences ('la reciprocité des consciences,' dit Maurice Nédoncelle dans une récente thèse), nous dirions mieux:

la communication des existences, l'existence avec autrui, il faudrait écrire la *comexistence* (*mitsein*).” Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 208; Eng. pp. 140-50.

39. *Manifeste*, I, p. 526; Eng. p. 71.

40. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 67, and *Manifeste*, I, p. 526; Eng. p. 71.

41. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, p. 452; Eng. p. 18.

42. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 527; Eng. p. 74.

43. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 452; Eng. p. 19.

44. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 225; Eng. p. 170.

45. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 433; Eng. p. xiii.

46. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 432-433; Eng. p. xiii. Also *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 420; Eng. p. 101.

47. “La vie de la personne, on le voit, n'est pas une separation, une évasion, une aliénation, elle est *présence et engagement*. La personne n'est pas une retraite intérieure, un domaine circonscrit, auquel viendrait s'accoter du dehors mon activité. Elle est une présence agissante dans le volume total de l'homme, toute son activité y est intéressée.” Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 526; Eng. p. 73. Cf. also, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 452; Eng. p. 19.

48. Mounier, “Catholic Personalism,” p. 333.

49. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 169.

50. “Pas plus qu'aucune autre donnée psychique, l'espace ne s'impose à nous comme une fatalité, il est comme toutes les autres une aventure proposée à notre prise. Pour posséder l'espace, il faut le dominer.” Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 306; Eng. p. 76. “Le présent vivant est un étalement vécu, gros de mémoire vivante et de promesse d'avenir. Affirmation du *je* dans son actualité, il est en même temps le rappel de son épaisseur d'expérience et de sa capacité créatrice.” Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 316; Eng. p. 81.

51. “En restaurant la dignité de la durée vécue, Bergson a, bon

gré mal gré, longtemps empêché que l'on regarde avec justice les régions où la durée touche à l'espace par l'extension et le temps mesuré. . . . Il n'est pas possible de représenter hors de l'abondance spatiale ce mouvement créateur dont le mot d'*épanouissement* rend exactement la double polarité. Qu'il en soit donc fini de ces romantismes de la durée pure qui nous proposent on ne sait quelle impossible évasion au pays de la quatrième dimension, où l'homme perdrait sa chair et son sens. Le temps retrouvé, c'est en même temps l'espace retrouvé. La durée a certes plus d'affinités avec ce que nous avons appelé l'espace obscur qu'avec l'espace clair. Mais nulle part, entre ces diverses réalités de base, on ne peut porter le tranchet." Mounier, *Traité*, II, pp. 310, 311; Eng. pp. 77, 78. Mounier has a fascinating analysis of lived space and duration in a section of this treatise subtitled: "The Me-Here-Now," *Traité*, II, pp. 299-322; Eng. pp. 69-85.

52. Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 311; Eng. p. 78.

53. Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 316; Eng. p. 80. Also, "La conscience vitale du temps est en ce sens une conscience agressive. Mais elle est aussi une conscience accueillante: l'avenir, parce qu'il est avenir, ne me cède et ne prend de réalité pour moi que dans la mesure où je lui fais crédit, où je l'accepte pour ce qu'il veut être, comme avenir. . . ." Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 311; Eng. p. 78.

54. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 169.

55. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Essays in Existentialism*, pp. 100-101.

56. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, II, p. 217; Eng. p. 160.

57. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 403; Eng. p. 80.

58. "Il reste en effet, à la base du marxisme, une négation fondamentale du spirituel comme réalité autonome, première et creatrice." Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 513; Eng. p. 52.

59. "Il ne voit dans la réalité spirituelle que 'reflets idéologiques,' à tout le moins un état second de l'être. . . . Certes il admet, une action propre du spirituel, idéologies et volontés, sur le progrès dialectique de l'histoire. Mais si les idées, et les volontés, qu'elles mettent en mouvement, 'exercent une influence qui réagit sur l'entière évolution de la société, et même de l'économie,' 'néanmoins elle restent sous l'influence du développement économique'." Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 513, Eng. p. 52. The quotations included in

the text are from a letter of Engels to Conrad Schmidt, October 27, 1890.

60. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 513; Eng. p. 52.

61. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 694.

62. "Le spirituel, pour le chrétien, c'est en toute rigueur la présence dans notre vie de la vie éternelle, en opposition à nos activités naturelles. Mais cette vie éternelle 'est elle-même charnelle' et ne s'offre à nous communément qu'à travers ces activités naturelles." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 694.

63. "Nous n'avons pas à apporter le spirituel au temporel, il y est déjà, notre rôle est de l'y découvrir et de l'y faire vivre, proprement de l'y communier. Le temporel tout entier est le sacrement du Royaume de Dieu." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 694.

64. "Si abondante et subtile soit la lumière que l'esprit humain peut glisser jusque dans les articulations les plus fines de l'univers, la matérialité existe d'une existence irréductible, autonome, hostile à la conscience. Elle ne peut se résoudre en un rapport intérieur de conscience. C'est cette affirmation que Marx-Engels appellent matérialiste. Mais elle est conforme au réalisme le plus traditionnel, à un réalisme qui ne s'interdit pas d'intégrer les éléments valables de la critique idéaliste. Ce qui est radicalement étranger à la conscience n'est que dispersion pure, aveugle et opaque. On ne peut parler d'un objet, à plus forte raison d'un monde qu'en rapport à une conscience qui le perçoit. C'est ne rien dire que réduire à un réseau de relations. Que seraient des relations qui ne seraient pas perçues? Le rapport dialectique de la matière à la conscience est aussi irréductible que l'existence de l'une et de l'autre." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 446-447; Eng. p. 10.

65. "... l'une est une *tendance permanente à la dépersonnalisation*. Elle n'affecte pas seulement cette matière qui est l'impersonnalité, la dispersion, l'indifférence mêmes, qui tend au nivellement (dégradation de l'énergie), à l'identité ou à la répétition homogène comme à sa fin. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 444; Eng. p. 7.

66. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 217; Eng. p. 160.

67. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 441; Eng. p. 4.

68. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 447; Eng. p. 11.

69. Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 529; Eng. p. 196.

70. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 447; Eng. p. 11.

71. "Il n'est pas *situé*, il est *pris* dans un corps, dans un temps, dans un lieu, dans un monde, dans une tranche d'histoire,—et tout cela est son corps, voulu tel et tel, en liaison avec une mission singulière, par une intention particulière de Dieu." Mounier, *Feu la chrétienté*, III, p. 591. Cf. also *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 191; Eng. p. 127.

72. "Pourquoi suis-je ici plutôt que là, maintenant plutôt que lors: un mystérieux dessein en a décidé antérieurement à toute volonté de ma part." Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 191; Eng. p. 127.

73. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 592.

74. "Le canton de l'univers qui nous est départi ne nous enferme pas pour autant dans cette sorte de provincialisme spirituel que les traditionalistes réactionnaires ont voulu imposer à l'humanité voyageuse et inquiète d'aventure. Ses contraintes mêmes sont ouvertes sur un appel d'avenir, et ses paysages se profilent sur un horizon d'universalité. Mounier *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 192. Eng. p. 127. Cf. also *Traité*, II, pp. 529, 645; Eng. pp. 196, 244.

75. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, II, p. 191; Eng. p. 127.

76. "Une liberté qui jaillit comme un pur fait, qui est si étroitement impliquée dans l'affirmation brute de l'existence qu'elle évoque une nécessité—Sartre dit une condamnation—est une nature aveugle, un pouvoir nu. Qui la distinguera de l'arbitraire vital et de la volonté de puissance? Comment sera-t-elle mienne, si je ne puis la refuser?" Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 479; Eng. p. 57.

77. "Ma liberté n'est pas seulement jaillissante, elle est ordonnée, ou mieux encore appelée. Cet appel lui donne sa force d'élan, et c'est pourquoi, à une analyse insuffisante, il se confond avec son élan. Mais sans lui l'élan retombe, s'adapte." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 482; Eng. p. 61.

78. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 242; Eng. p. 193.

79. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 529; Eng. p. 77.
80. Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 645; Eng. p. 244.
81. Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 645; Eng. p. 244.
82. Mounier, *L'Affrontement chrétien*, III, p. 26.
83. Mounier, *L'Affrontement chrétien*, III, p. 26.
84. Mounier, *L'Affrontement chrétien*, III, p. 26, and *Traité*, II, p. 350.
85. Mounier, *Traité*, II, p. 435. "La fidélité, du moins la seule qui mérite ce nom, est l'extension que prend, dans une durée de plus en plus compréhensive et gonflée d'éternité, un élan créateur toujours actuel et toujours tendu vers une promesse prochaine, aussi vide que possible du passé mort; elle est la plénitude du contentement en même temps que la ferveur de l'espérance, toujours elle-même et toujours autre; elle est en même temps le plus complet hommage rendu au réel et à la préférence donnée à l'existence durable sur la poursuite des chimères." Eng. pp. 143-144.
86. Mounier, *L'Affrontement chrétien*, III, p. 59.
87. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 385; Eng. p. 65. He emphasizes the unimportance of spatial separation to transcendence again in *La Petite Peur*, where he writes: "L'éternel chrétien est à la fois transcendant et immanent, il est transcendant par émergence et incommensurabilité intime avec le monde, non par séparation d'avec le monde." III, p. 403; Eng. p. 80.
88. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 443; Eng. p. 5.
89. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 223; Eng. p. 167.
90. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 483; Eng. p. 63.
91. Mounier, "Catholic Personalism," p. 327.
92. "[La décision créatrice] est prise dans l'obscurité et dans la confusion mais elle devient l'origine créatrice d'un ordre nouveau et d'une intelligibilité nouvelle. Par elle seule le monde avance et l'homme se forme. Aucune organisation technique ne la remplacera:

tout au contraire, plus de technique appelle plus de liberté." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 483; Eng. p. 63.

93. "Or, agir, c'est choisir, par conséquent trancher, couper court, et tout en adoptant, refuser, repousser. . . . Une mentalité infantile survit chez ces individualités trop abondantes qui ne veulent rien exclure ni peiner personne, qui appellent compréhension leur incapacité de trier, et ouverture la confusion qui en résulte. Edifier, c'est sacrifier. Mais la décision n'est pas un coup de force intérieure aveugle et arbitraire. C'est la personne tout entière à son avenir attachée, concentrée dans un acte dur et riche, qui résume son expérience et lui intègre une expérience nouvelle. Les refus dont il s'accompagne sont des renoncements réels, embarrassants et parfois déchirants, ils ne sont pas de mutilations. Ils partent d'une plénitude exigeante, et non pas d'une indigence. Aussi sont-ils créateurs." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 474; Eng. p. 51.

94. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 483; Eng. p. 63.

95. "Cependant, une sorte de myopie philosophique a détourné sur l'acte du choix le centre de gravité de la liberté, qui est dans la libération consécutive au choix heureux." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 483-484; Eng. pp. 63-64.

96. "L'Absolu n'est pas de ce monde et n'est pas commensurable à ce monde. Nous ne nous engageons jamais que dans des combats discutables sur des causes imparfaites. Refuser pour autant l'engagement c'est refuser la condition humaine." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 504; Eng. pp. 91-92.

97. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 193; Eng. p. 129.

98. "Nous avons acquis à ce moment-là le sens de cet engagement nécessaire même dans des positions impures: le devoir des hommes qui ont des intentions pures sera d'entrer dans l'impur en tachant de le purifier de l'intérieur, mais en ne s'évadant pas de cet impur." Mounier, "Cinq étapes d'Esprit," *Bulletin des Amis d'Emmanuel Mounier*, (No. 29, March, 1967. First published in December, 1944), p. 17. It was Paul Landsberg who convinced Mounier that he must avoid aloofness and excessive purism. In this article Mounier acknowledges the enormous influence that Landsberg had upon him. Ironically, Landsberg became a victim of the *non-engagé*. He died in a Nazi concentration camp after being refused sanctuary in France during the purge by Hitler. Cf. the letters from Mounier to

Nicholas Berdiaeff and to his wife Paulette concerning Landsberg. *Sa Génération*, IV, pp. 580, 640.

99. "... Or nôtre corps ne s'arrête plus aujourd'hui à l'usage de nos bras et de nos jambes, il s'étend à l'ensemble de l'appareil technique." Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 216; Eng. p. 158.

100. "L'exploitation de la nature n'est pas destinée à articuler sur un réseau de déterminismes un réseau de réflexes conditionnels mais à ouvrir, devant la liberté créatrice d'un nombre d'hommes toujours plus grand, de plus hautes possibilités d'humanité. C'est la force d'affirmation personnelle qui brise l'obstacle et fraye la voie. Pour cela, elle doit nier la nature comme donnée pour l'affirmer comme oeuvre, comme ouvre personnelle et support de toute personnalisation. Alors l'appartenance à la nature devient maîtrise de la nature, le monde s'annexe à la chair de l'homme et à son destin." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 447-448; Eng. p. 12.

101. "L'âge technique fera courir les plus grands dangers au mouvement de personnalisation, comme le brusque épanouissement de son corps risque de chavirer l'équilibre de l'adolescent. Mais aucune malédiction particulière ne le frappe. Loin d'être une erreur funeste des cantons européens, il est peut-être le moyen par lequel l'homme un jour envahira l'univers, y développera son royaume et même au regard de l'imagination, cessera d'être un paradoxe perdu dans l'espace." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 449; Eng. p. 14. Mounier differs from Péguy, Bernanos, Marcel, etc., in refusing to concentrate on the negative, threatening aspects of technology. Without minimizing the threats, he affirms with confidence man's ability to overcome the difficulties.

102. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 528; Eng. p. 76.

103. "La personne est une existence capable de se détacher d'elle-même, de se déposséder, de se décentrer pour devenir disponible à autrui. Pour la tradition personnaliste (chrétienne notamment) l'ascèse de la dépossession est l'ascèse centrale de la vie personnelle; ne libère les autres ou le monde que celui qui s'est d'abord ainsi libéré lui-même. Les anciens parlaient de lutter contre l'amour-propre: nous l'appelons aujourd'hui égocentrisme, narcissisme, individualisme." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 454; Eng. p. 21. Cf. *Manifeste*, I, p. 454; Eng. p. 21. Cf. also *Manifeste*, I, p. 528, p. 454; Eng. p. 76, p. 21.

104. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 455; Eng. p. 23.

105. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 455; Eng. p. 23.

106. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 453; Eng. p. 20.

107. "Par expérience intérieure, la personne nous apparaît aussi comme une présence dirigée vers le monde et les autres personnes, sans bornes mêlée à eux, en perspective d'universalité. Les autres personnes ne la limitent pas, elles la font être et croître. Elle n'existe que vers autrui, elle ne se connaît que par autrui, elle ne se trouve qu'en autrui. L'expérience primitive de la personne est l'expérience de la seconde personne. Le *tu*, et en lui le *nous*, précède le *je*, ou au moins l'accompagne." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 453; Eng. p. 20.

108. "Il s'agit de ce miracle, la communion de deux Personnes. C'est là seulement, dans la découverte d'un *Toi* par un *Je*, et dans la formation d'un *Nous* personnel, dépassant ces termes, que nous élucidons le vrai lien social humain. . . . Deux êtres qui s'aiment par ces profondeurs arrivent à former, avec leurs deux personnes, une vraie Personne nouvelle." Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 236.

109. Cf. Mounier's discussion of the Mystical Body in *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 400-403; Eng. pp. 192-193. Also *Révolution*, I, pp. 236-238.

110. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 76.

111. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 406; Eng. p. 84.

112. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 242; Eng. p. 193.

113. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 186; Eng. p. 119. Cf. Charles Péguy, "Clio I," *Temporal and Eternal*, trans. Alexander Dru (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), where he speaks of the eternal illuminating and penetrating the temporal.

114. "Mais il y a une distance qu'on ne saurait atténuer entre l'optimisme historique qui se donne le schéma linéaire d'une humanité avançant automatiquement avec le progrès de son organisation dans une durée monocorde, et l'optimisme tragique du chrétien pour qui le sens de progrès n'est jamais entièrement representable, ne se définit pas hors du paradoxe de la Croix, et n'exclut pas qu'à travers lui se déchaînent jusqu'au dernier jour les catastrophes des puissances infernales." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 411; Eng. p. 91.

CHAPTER 4

1. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, pp. 596, 599 and *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 495; Eng., p. 79.
2. Mounier, *Introduction aux existentialismes*, III, p. 125; Eng. p. 67.
3. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 495; p. 79.
4. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 601.
5. "La première, et non la moindre, est de savoir si cette Histoire, qui joue le jeu par-dessus les volontés individuelles, leur laisse encore un champ d'initiative." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 599.
6. *Supra*, chapter three, p. 79, note 111.
7. Robert Capon, *An Offering of Uncles* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 92-93.
8. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 208; Eng. p. 79.
9. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 495; Eng. pp. 149-150.
10. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 77.
11. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 529; Eng. p. 77.
12. "Le lien de la personne à la communauté est si organique que l'on peut dire des vraies communautés qu'elles sont, réellement et non par figure, des *personnes collectives*, des *personnes de personnes*." Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 194.
13. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 76.
14. "Toute l'humanité est une immense conspiration d'amour penchée sur chacun de ses membres. Mais il manque parfois de conspirateurs." Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 193.
15. "*L'amour est l'unité de la communauté comme la vocation est l'unité de la personne.*" Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 193.
16. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 210; Eng. p. 152.

17. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 232; Eng. pp. 178-179.
18. Mounier, *Manifeste*, p. 536; Eng. p. 89.
19. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 537; Eng. p. 91.
20. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 536; Eng. pp. 90-91.
21. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, pp. 536-541; Eng. pp. 90-96. Also *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 458-459; Eng. pp. 27-29. *Revolution*, I, pp. 185-209.
22. Paul Peeters, "Mounier, esti-il récupérable?" *Bulletin* #37, avril, 1971, p. 33. I have translated the diagram prepared by Mr. Peeters and have inverted it so that the "Personalist Community" appears at the top of the page. This seems to be a better image of the *ascent* towards community which Mounier envisions.
23. Mounier, *Revolution*, I, p. 188.
24. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 537; Eng. p. 91.
25. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, pp. 537-538; Eng. p. 92.
26. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, pp. 188-189.
27. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 189.
28. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 189. Also, *Manifeste*, I, p. 538; Eng. pp. 92-93.
29. "Ne confondons pas ce dépassement de l'être et la turbulence de l'élan vital: l'élan vital ne nous mène à rien d'autre que lui-même; il est passion de la vie à tout prix, fût-ce au prix des valeurs qui lui donneraient un sens. Accepter la souffrance et la mort pour ne pas trahir la condition humaine—du sacrifice à l'héroïsmes—est au contraire l'acte suprême de la personne. Elle commence, comme l'écrit Gabriel Marcel, au moment où je prends conscience que "je suis plus que ma vie." Tel est son paradoxe; elle ne se trouve (au plan personnel) qu'en se perdant (au plan biologique)." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 486; Eng. p. 66.
30. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 538; Eng. p. 94.
31. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 458-459; Eng. p. 28.

32. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 188; Eng. p. 121.

33. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 539; Eng., p. 94. Cf. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 145, where Mounier expresses his belief in "eternal truths": "Nous croyons, nous, aux vérités éternelles. Nous sommes attentifs à ne pas les confondre avec nos vieilles habitudes, et sensibles au paysage où chaque époque les replace. Mais nous croyons à ce filet solide et nuancé de lumière tendu par-dessus les temps et les lieux. C'est lui qui éclaire à chaque moment le plan de l'histoire."

34. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 539; Eng. pp. 94-95.

35. "Nous assistons depuis quelques années à ce plaisant paradoxe que les professionnels de la libre adhésion, du consentement des consciences et de la relativité des jugements sont les plus impitoyables, malgré le temps qui passe et change les situations des hommes, à proclamer l'éternité des signatures données. Un contrat qui ne se reconnaît de valeur que de pure forme et par la rencontre instantanée de deux volontés est, quand on le prolonge, le plus sûr instrument de tyrannie sur l'avenir et contre la justice; sourde et solennelle référence qui veut écrire l'histoire." Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 161. *Infra*, note 36.

36. "Chaque membre de la communauté contractuelle s'engage à rendre tels services à certains autres moyennant bénéfice réciproque. Donnant, donnant, même vis-à-vis de L'Etat: le rentier paye des impôts et reçoit en échange des égouts, des agents de police, et autres utilités du même ordre. . . . L'égalité des parties serait-elle assurée, il reste que le contrat ne met pas en communion deux hommes, il dresse deux égoïsmes, deux intérêts, deux méfiances, deux ruses et les unit dans une paix armée." Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 202.

37. "La personne ne peut donc recevoir du dehors ni la liberté spirituelle ni la communauté. Tout ce que peut faire, et tout ce que doit faire pour la personne, un régime institutionnel, c'est niveler certains obstacles extérieurs et favoriser certains voies." Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 534; Eng. p. 86. Also *De la propriété*, I, p. 448.

38. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 223; Eng. p. 167.

39. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 445; Eng. p. 8.

40. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 540; Eng. p. 98. Also *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 457-458; Eng. p. 26.

41. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 459; Eng. pp. 28-29.

42. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 449; Eng. p. 14. Man objectivizes himself not only on technology, but also in his social structures, e.g., law, the state, language. Though "such mediations are necessary to a spirit living in the world," Mounier points out that there is also danger of alienation—"danger for the Christian in his Church, and for the intellectual in his documents, as much as for the worker in the factory, or the consumer of luxury goods." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 389; Eng. p. 63.

43. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 390; Eng. p. 64. Because the machine "is the extension of man's body into the world," Mounier sees the present revolt against technology as a new form of Manicheism. The old Manicheism condemned the natural body; the new one "extends the condemnation of this new and disquieting body which man has recently acquired." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 413; Eng. p. 93.

44. "Tout l'appareil légal, politique, social ou économique n'a d'autre mission dernière que d'assurer d'abord aux personnes en formation la zone d'isolement, de protection, de jeu et de loisir qui leur permettra de reconnaître en pleine liberté spirituelle cette vocation; ensuite de les aider sans contrainte à se dégager des conformismes et des erreurs d'aiguillage; enfin de leur donner, par l'agencement de l'organisme social et économique, les moyens matériels nécessaires pour donner à cette vocation son maximum de fécondité. Il faut préciser que cette aide est due à tous sans exception; qu'elle ne saurait être qu'une aide discrète, laissant au risque et à l'initiative créatrice tout le champ nécessaire. *La personne seule trouve sa vocation et fait son destin. Personne autre, ni homme, ni collectivité, ne peut en usurper la charge.*" Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 528; Eng. pp. 76-77.

45. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 529; Eng. p. 76.

46. *Supra*, note 44.

47. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 539; Eng. p. 95.

48. "De nombreux individus et de vastes mouvements ont depuis longtemps, et sans doute depuis que l'homme est homme, brisé ces servitudes: seul ou en corps, l'homme touche d'un bond les sommets de l'humanité, avant de reprendre pas à pas ses marches d'approche. Mais l'univers personnel n'existe encore qu'à l'état d'ilots individuels

ou collectifs, de promesses à réaliser. Sa conquête progressive, c'est l'histoire de l'homme." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 445; Eng. p. 8.

49. "Un univers qui sème des milliards d'étoiles sur des milliards d'années-lumière, qui prodigue autour de chaque naissance des milliers de germes, nous semble plutôt disposé à jeter quelques millions d'années dans la balance de l'histoire que les quelques maigres siècles d'expérience que nous totalisons derrière nous. Les premiers chrétiens? disait quelqu'un, mais il s'agit peut-être de nous. Peut-être sommes-nous aussi, à l'échelle de l'histoire totale, les hommes primitifs." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 349; Eng. p. 12.

50. "Notre destin immédiat c'est d'avancer dans l'histoire et de faire de l'histoire, même dans une perspective éternelle où tout ce labeur humain aurait sa fin suprême au-delà de lui-même. . . . Le personnaliste chrétien lui-même, si sa visée dépasse l'histoire, ne peut avancer vers elles [les constantes de la condition humaine] que dans l'histoire et pour déterminer ses moyens il doit interroger les possibilités de l'histoire. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 242; Eng. p. 193.

51. Mounier, *Manifeste*, I, p. 539; Eng. p. 95.

52. "Pour le chrétien, nous l'avons vu, la fin du monde, avec sa double urgence, l'urgence de jugement et l'offre permanente de la promesse de gloire, est comme distribuée sur l'ensemble de l'histoire et sur l'étalement de chaque vie; elle est dévalorisée de ce fait en tant qu'épisode historique localisé." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 351; Eng. p. 15.

53. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 420; Eng. p. 100.

54. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 420-421; Eng. pp. 100-101.

55. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 402; Eng. p. 79.

56. "Certes il ne faut pas faire de l'histoire sacrée une réalité si étrangère à l'histoire profane qu'elle paraisse se dérouler dans un autre monde que le nôtre et donne ainsi à l'histoire profane toute liberté d'en prendre à son aise; c'est le danger de la formule que l'on a entendue récemment de la part de quelques jeunes catholiques: 'A l'Eglise le spirituel, au marxisme le temporel.' L'Histoire sacrée est une quatrième dimension, mais une dimension constituante de l'histoire." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 602. Jean Danielou

criticizes Mounier's view of the relationship of secular and sacred history: "Emmanuel Mounier shows a want of proportion when he defines the progress of the Church exclusively in terms of 'sanctifying the new shapes of the world;' and again when he accuses those who oppose a 'liturgical cosmos' to the 'scientific and rational cosmos' of confusing 'the eternal essence of religious acts with outmoded forms of representation'." Jean Danielou, *The Lord of History*, trans. Nigel Abercrombie, (Chicago: Regnery, 1958), p. 94 Cf. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 391-425; Eng. pp. 65-108.

57. Mounier, "Catholic Personalism," p. 375.

58. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 400; Eng. p. 77.

59. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, *passim*.

60. Mounier, "Catholic Personalism," p. 375.

61. Mounier, *L'Affrontement Chrétien*, III, pp. 20-21; Eng. p. 18.

62. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 406; Eng. p. 85.

63. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 405; Eng. p. 83.

64. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 411; Eng. p. 91.

65. "Mais voici qu'en cours de route, nouvelle surprise, un pouvoir unique nous est acquis, inverse de tous les autres, le pouvoir de faire sauter cette planète et l'humanité qui la porte et son pouvoir même de créer des pouvoirs. Instant solennel. Jusqu'ici on ne pouvait dire de l'humanité qu'elle était maîtresse de son avenir, car elle était encore *condamnée* à un avenir, alors que chaque homme, individuellement, peut quand il veut, se tirer une balle dans la tempe. Maintenant l'humanité comme telle va devoir se choisir et il lui faudra, de toute évidence, un effort héroïque pour ne pas choisir la facilité, le suicide. On peut dire que sa maturité commence à cette heure. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, pp. 356-357; Eng. p. 22.

66. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 411; Eng. p. 90.

67. Mounier: cf. *Existentialismes*, III, pp. 98-99; Eng. pp. 36-37 and *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 454, 472-473; Eng. pp. 21, 48-49.

68. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 410; Eng. p. 90.

69. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 349 Eng. p. 12.

70. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 497; Eng. p. 82.

71. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 497; Eng. p. 82.

72. "Il [le progrès de l'histoire] ne peut ignorer que travaille dans le monde, à travers l'épanouissement du Royaume de Dieu, une puissance positive de Mal, qui remporte ses victoires provisoires et parfois durables. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 405; Eng. p. 83. Also, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 497; Eng. p. 82.

73. "Pour le chrétien, il est même une Personne, comme le Bien." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 497; Eng. p. 82.

74. "The person is, by God's creative will, an absolute in the sense that because of the model it is expected to imitate and the ontological perfection it is thereby called to realize, it is 'that which is most perfect in the whole of nature—perfection that the man of grace will further elevate to the infinite.'" Mounier, "Catholic Personalism," p. 365.

75. "Le suprême achèvement de la personne coïncide avec le terme de la dépossession, dans la joie la plus parfaite. Le suprême attachement avec le détachement total." Mounier, *De la propriété capitaliste*, I, p. 437.

76. "Surgie du néant, notre liberté est jaillissement de néant en même temps que jaillissement d'existence." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 497.

77. "In Cold Blood," Columbia Motion Picture 1968. This is a film adaptation of Truman Capote's book: *In Cold Blood* (New York: Random House, 1965).

78. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 207; Eng. p. 148.

79. "Est-ce l'être, est-ce le néant, est-ce le mal, est-ce le bien qui finalement domine? Une sorte de confiance joyeuse liée à l'expérience personnelle épanouie incline à la réponse optimiste. Mais ni l'expérience, ni la raison ne peuvent décider. Ceux qui le font, chrétiens ou non, ne le font que guidés par une foi qui déborde toute expérience." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 497; Eng. p. 82.

80. "On ne peut pas dire que la royaume de Satan progresse à

proprement parler car, il n'a pas les promesses de vie; déjà vaincu par l'Incarnation, s'il n'est encore dépossédé, il est en perte de ressources." Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 412; Eng. p. 91.

81. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 348, also pp. 412-413, 420; Eng. p. 11, also pp. 91-92, 107.

82. "Cet empire de la personne sur les instruments de son destin s'étend assez loin autour d'elle pour que les événements même de notre vie semblent venir parfois se grouper autour de nous à l'image même de notre caractère; dans une large mesure on peut dire de chacun qu'il a les événements qu'il mérite. Mounier, *Traité*, II, pp. 61-62 Eng. pp. 17-18.

83. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 230; Eng. p. 177. Jean Marie Domenach describes Mounier's outlook on events: "For Emmanuel Mounier, an event no matter how distant, has a human shape. His attitude in facing events as in facing men, can best be defined by a word which is his: *affrontement*. It is his position of man in confrontation, facing that which comes whether it be friend or enemy (and it is undoubtedly both at once), a position which is at the same time one of acceptance and of combat. . . . Nothing enervated Mounier more than a certain way of cheating with information. He went to the fact; he despoiled it of its partiality, and if the fact seemed to contradict his point of view, he accepted it with so much the more respect. Hence this noticeable effort in his commentaries not to abandon any of the faces of the event, this concern for nuances which weighted his text and which was sometimes irritating because what is a search for truth is taken for hesitation." "Le sens de l'événement chez Emmanuel Mounier," *Bulletin* #3, pp. 14-15.

84. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 172.

85. *Supra*. Chap. 1, n. 8.

86. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 186; Eng. p. 119. The translation by Cynthia Rowland reads: "In this vertical semi-intelligibility of history. . . ." Since the French text reads: "Dans cette quasi-inintelligibilité verticale de l'histoire. . . ." I have altered her translation slightly to retain the nuance in the French text.

87. "Puisque le sens total de l'histoire ne nous est pas accessible, tout en l'affirmant dans sa transcendance, je préfère donc dire, sur le plan de l'action, que nous avons à chercher et à respecter les *indications* ou mieux les *provocations* de l'histoire." Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 642. Cf. *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 222; Eng. p. 166.

88. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 186; Eng. p. 119.

89. "Il est, dans les partis les plus divers, une façon de présenter 'le sens de l'histoire' ou le 'dessein providentiel' qui rend introuvable la liberté de l'homme sous la dialectique collective. Perspective inacceptable dans un univers de personnes." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 495; Eng. p. 79.

90. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 495; Eng. p. 79.

91. Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 172.

92. "Il est proprement ce que je ne possède pas, ce que je ne crée pas, la catastrophe, l'*appel* à sortir." (Italics mine) Mounier, *Révolution*, I, p. 172.

93. Mounier, "Catholic Personalism," p. 348.

94. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 419; Eng. p. 101.

95. *Supra*, Chapter 3, p. 79, note 111.

96. *Supra*, Chapter 2, pp. 48-50, notes 56-66.

97. *Supra*, Chapter 2, p. 54, note 80.

98. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, pp. 489-490; Eng. p. 71.

99. Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 487; Eng. p. 68. Cf. *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 225; Eng. p. 169.

100. *Supra*, Chapter 4, p. 99, note 76.

101. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 356; Eng. p. 22.

102. Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 186; Eng. p. 119.

CHAPTER 5

1. "Il n'y a pas d'humanité s'il n'y a pas d'*aventure* humaine, et toujours ouverte. Sinon pourquoi le monde durerait-il, pourquoi l'Histoire se déroulerait-elle?" Mounier, *Qu'est-ce que*, I, p. 222; Eng. p. 166.

2. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), pp. 264, 271-272.

3. Mounier, *Revolution*, I, pp. 168-169.

4. "On demandera des preuves de la transcendance, de la valeur des valeurs. Appartenant à l'univers de la liberté, la transcendance n'est pas objet de preuve. Sa certitude apparaît dans la plénitude de la vie personnelle, et s'affaïsse avec ses retombées. Le sujet peut alors devenir aveugle à la valeur, et sa déception ontologiques tourner à la haine." Mounier, *Le Personnalisme*, III, p. 487; Eng. p. 68.

5. *Supra*, Chapter 1, pp. 33-35.

6. Francis Jeanson, "Une pensée combattante," *Esprit*, XVIII, No. 174 (décembre, 1950), p. 859.

7. Men usually seek an education in order to gain such exposure. Cf. Mounier's brief accounts of the aims of education in *Qu'est-ce que*, III, p. 243, and *Manifeste*, I, pp. 550-557; Eng. pp. 111-119.

8. Sounding a bit like Teilhard again, Mounier suggests that History is precarious for the individual if not for the whole of Man. The outcome of an individual's history is "radically uncertain." *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 600. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 152.

9. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 600.

10. Mounier, *Feu la Chrétienté*, III, p. 600.

11. *Supra*, Chapter 1, note 8.

12. Mounier, *La Petite Peur*, III, p. 242; Eng. p. 193.

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